Philadelphia's Own Florida Man

An unlikely Philadelphia member in Miami and the roots of the Family's Trenton crew.

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The images of 1980s Philadelphia boss Nicky Scarfo and his mob of loyalists vacationing in South Florida are well-known to those with even a casual interest in Scarfo's organization. Photos of the Scarfo regime on boats and beaches have become iconic, with ranking members of this secret society openly expressing comradery while showing off fresh tans and new swim trunks. Today's Philadelphia boss Joey Merlino has carried on where Scarfo left off, posing with close associates in countless social media photos from his base in Boca Raton.

Despite the strong association between Philadelphia and Florida in recent decades, the Philadelphia Family is unlike its New York counterparts in that it had significantly fewer historic members and associates living full-time in South Florida. In fact, there is only one known member in the organization's history who lived exclusively in Miami. This man never resided in Philadelphia or South Jersey, nor was he from the Family's outpost in Newark. He was from New York City and his Cosa Nostra affiliation with Philadelphia appears to be purely a product of Florida.

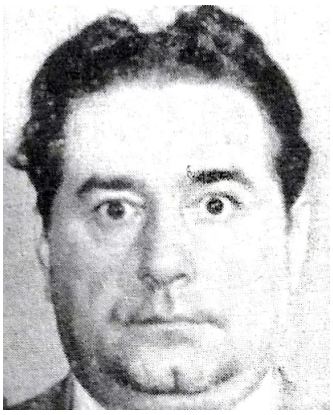
Along with providing biographical information on this Florida member, this article covers the Philadelphia Family's early presence in Miami, the roots of its Trenton crew, and the rise of Angelo Bruno as Philadelphia boss. Bruno himself is an essential part of this Florida discussion, as is John Simone. There is much more to Bruno and Simone's shared story that has not been properly covered and this includes the states of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, and Florida — not to mention Sicily — with mafia connections playing a role at every stage.

Roots in East Harlem & the Bronx

Alfredo Felice, commonly known as "Freddy Red Shirt" and "Freddy Franco", was well-known to federal law enforcement spanning decades. The FBI and FBN both carried Felice as a fixture of the Miami mafia network and documented his history of narcotics trafficking, gambling, and general association with major Cosa Nostra members from various national groups,

particularly the New York Genovese and Lucchese Families. Freddy Felice's relationship to this crowd goes back to his roots in New York City.

Born in 1912 to a father from Carolei in Calabria's Cosenza province, Freddy Felice was the product of a New York City mafia element that produced some of the earliest American recruits in Sicilian-centric organizations otherwise linked through blood and marriage. Men who did not come from a Sicilian lineage but lived in mafia-controlled urban neighborhoods became acquainted with local mafiosi and proved themselves via street crime and violence, in turn receiving recognition and even induction into Cosa Nostra as the organization became increasingly pan-Italian and Americanized. This describes the environment Freddy Felice grew up in, first in East Harlem and later after his family moved to the Bronx. Felice himself was not without family connections to Cosa Nostra, however.



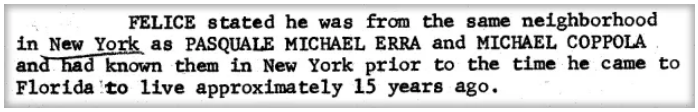
Freddy Felice had roots in East Harlem and the Bronx.

Following his dramatic cooperation with the FBI in 1962, East Harlem native Joe Valachi identified Freddy Felice's older brother Peter as an early member of the Gambino Family. Known as "Petey Red Shirt" for his flashy attire, Peter Felice lived in the Bronx but continued to operate in Harlem where he presumably formed the relationships that led to his induction into Cosa Nostra by 1931. The Gambino organization was at that time headed by the Brooklyn-based Vincenzo Mangano, though the Family leadership had a significant presence in the Bronx in the years before the Palermo-born Mangano became boss.

Other Gambino leaders from Palermo like Salvatore D'Aquila, Stefano Ferrigno, Frank Scalise, and even Carlo and Paolo Gambino lived in the Bronx during the period Petey Red Shirt entered Cosa Nostra. Unlike the deeper Sicilian roots shared by these men, Felice's membership was unquestionably the product of local American relationships formed on the streets of East Harlem.

Joe Valachi, the man who identified Peter Felice as a Gambino member, was a Neapolitan-American who similarly proved himself to Cosa Nostra through street crime in these tough immigrant neighborhoods. As a Genovese member who operated near-exclusively in East Harlem and the Bronx, Joe Valachi's identifications of members in other groups often needs to be cross-referenced with other sources, but he is far more accurate when it comes to his own area of operation. Valachi's close friendship with Bronx Gambino leader Frank Scalise and others from this faction give his knowledge of Bronx and Harlem Gambino members a high degree of authority. The FBI agreed, carrying Petey Red Shirt Felice as a deceased Gambino member in their reports into the mid-1970s.

By the time the Felices moved to the Bronx in 1930, their next-door neighbors were a set of families with the surname Erra. Though these Erras included the given names Pasquale and Michael, they don't appear to be the same Erra brothers who joined the Genovese Family in years to come. However, Freddy Felice's closest friend and criminal associate in both New York and Florida was Genovese member Pasquale “Patsy” Erra, the two men later becoming neighbors in Miami Beach where they were mentioned in tandem by countless sources and frequently observed together by the FBI. Felice later admitted to the FBI he came from the same neighborhood as Erra in New York, suggesting a connection to these early neighbors of Freddy Felice who shared his best friend's surname.


FELICE stated he was from the same neighborhood in New York as PASQUALE MICHAEL ERRA and MICHAEL COPPOLA and had known them in New York prior to the time he came to Florida to live approximately 15 years ago.

Felice was a lifelong friend of Patsy Erra and Mike Coppola.

Though Peter Felice traced his arrest record back to 1920 and it included fourteen arrests and two convictions for burglary and a traffic violation, his brother Freddy's first arrest occurred in 1931 at the age of nineteen in Mount Vernon, being arrested for vagrancy with several other Italian youths. Peter Felice's induction into Cosa Nostra by this time overshadowed his teenage brother's minor arrest, but it marked the beginning of Freddy's lifetime commitment to illegal activity. Freddy would not only follow his brother Peter into Cosa Nostra but also carried his nickname, using the name Freddy Red Shirt for the rest of his life. Though they shared a nickname, the brothers would not have the opportunity to share Cosa Nostra membership at the same time.

The Fall of Petey Red Shirt

Peter Felice didn't have long to enjoy the benefits offered by the sprawling Gambino Family nor did he die of natural causes. Identified as a former bootlegging associate of the infamous Jack "Legs" Diamond, the 36-year-old Petey Red Shirt was killed by a single bullet to the head on the last day of 1936. Peter's killing took place in the early morning hours of December 31st inside Sally's Seafood Restaurant in East Harlem, owned by Salvatore “Capolla”. Salvatore was not present and claimed to be ill at the time, but Capolla's brothers were operating the restaurant on his behalf that night and attributed the killing to a drunken dispute provoked by Peter Felice.

The Capolla brothers claimed Peter Felice was belligerent, alternating between tears and anger, leading to a conflict with an unidentified man who eventually responded with a single act of extreme violence. The Capollas told investigators they were conspicuously busy and not paying attention when Felice was shot through the back of his head by the "unknown" killer. Following the murder, the Capolla brothers moved Peter Felice's large body outside to protect the restaurant from unwanted attention, with the lifeless Felice discovered several doors down on East 114th Street. Sally's Seafood was a short distance from the Harlem River near the famous Rao’s restaurant, a popular mafia hangout to this day.

A search of Peter Felice's body revealed no money, only seasonal holiday cards wishing would-be recipients a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. Described as a “Harlem bully”, Felice's murder was investigated as a "gangland" killing for obvious reasons, though it appears to have remained unsolved.

Newspapers detailed a number of arrests in the murdered Peter Felice's background after his death, including a 1930 arrest for homicide. Felice's criminal record provides a glimpse into how he earned his reputation in underworld circles, his numerous arrests for burglary and robbery noted earlier. His transition into “beer running” during Prohibition likely complemented his entry into the Gambino Family and he was said to transport alcohol from the Catskills to the Bronx, spending time in Acra outside of Albany for a time. He was also involved in the New York policy racket as of 1935.

Freddy Felice's brother "Petey Red Shirt" was murdered in 1936.

Newspaper speculation and law enforcement theories on underworld murders during this era should never be taken at face value, nor should witness accounts. Coverage of Peter Felice's murder described him as a has-been bootleger who fell from grace after the 1931 murder of his associate Legs Diamond, but the media and authorities were ignorant of Cosa Nostra at the time and Felice's status as a Gambino member would remain unknown for decades. These early accounts from outsiders make little to no distinction between a figure like Felice associating with the non-Italian Legs Diamond opposed to his involvement with fully-initiated Cosa Nostra figures, seeing shared criminal activities as a defining trait rather than the deeper systems governing mafia figures from within. That isn't to say contemporary speculation about Peter Felice's murder was incorrect, only that alternate theories should be explored as our understanding grows.

Photos prior to Felice's death show an undeniably gluttonous frame rare even for gangsters of the era. Late-night indulgence may have been a norm for the man and the lifestyle reflected in his appearance could lend itself to the Capolla brothers' account of his drunken antics at their restaurant after its official closing time. The brothers claimed the transport of Peter Felice's body from the restaurant was a response to their staying open past designated hours, fearing his murder would bring sanction from authorities. However, the brothers' convenient ignorance concerning the murder itself and their removing his body from the premises lends itself to speculation.

The account given by the Capollas suggests they were familiar with Peter Felice prior to his death. Given Felice's murderer was also in the restaurant "after hours" and the brothers were concerned about drawing undue attention to their extended hours of operation, it suggests the killer was similarly familiar to the owners of Sally's Seafood. It's likely many of the restaurant's patrons were familiar faces if not names in this insular East

Harlem neighborhood, especially in a location like East 114th Street where mafiosi felt comfortable drinking early into the morning. That the killer happened to be armed and willing to kill Felice in this contained environment is made more suspicious by the gunshot wound piercing Felice's skull from behind, indicating the murder did not occur mid-conflict.

The Capolla brothers could plead ignorance to law enforcement, but they would have to answer more directly to Peter Felice's mafia superiors due to his membership in the Gambino Family. If his murder truly was random and unsanctioned there would be an underworld investigation and potentially retaliation, with the careless murder of a made member sitting among the greatest sins in the mafia's own legal system. As one would expect, this violation is punishable by death. The Capolla brothers and their business would be at the mercy of Cosa Nostra and the brothers would be expected to provide detailed information about the incident to the Gambino Family — unless the Gambino leadership ordered or approved Peter Felice's murder themselves.

Joe Valachi identified "Petey Red Shirt" as an early Gambino member.

In addition to error-prone murder theories floated by law enforcement and the media, newspapers from this period commonly misspelled Italian surnames. Records can't be found confirming the existence of the "Capolla" brothers in or around East Harlem, suggesting the "Capolla" name was a similar sounding variant: Coppola obviously comes to mind. Peter Felice's brother Freddy would go on to associate closely with Genovese captain Mike Coppola first in New York and later in Miami, with informants and authorities mistakenly believing Freddy Felice was himself a Genovese member under Coppola. While Freddy Red Shirt didn't officially report to Mike Coppola, his best friend Patsy Erra did.

In the same FBI interview where he acknowledged his longstanding ties to Erra, Freddy Felice admitted his close relationship with Mike Coppola similarly went back to his old neighborhood in New York. The "Capolla" brothers from Sally's Seafood Restaurant don't match the names of Mike Coppola's brothers, though the late-night presence of a Harlem Cosa Nostra member in their establishment and the men's lack of cooperation with authorities would lend itself to mafia connections. The majority of Freddy Felice's relationships with New York mafia members have roots in East Harlem and the Bronx where his brother was well-known, suggesting Peter Felice and Mike Coppola were no strangers in their mutual habitat.

Joe Valachi told a story about the reputation for impulsive violence among Mike Coppola's *decina* members in the decades after Peter Felice's murder. Genovese member Joe Tortorici was a member of Coppola's crew who struck Valachi's nephew Fiore Siano following a late-night argument at fellow member Joe Lanza's Manhattan restaurant. Valachi described how he previously told Siano and the Pagano brothers that if a member of Mike Coppola's group ever took a swing at them to simply get a gun and shoot the culprit, as Coppola's men were known for provoking reckless conflicts of this nature. Valachi's proteges took his advice to heart.

As a Cosa Nostra member, Joe Valachi was responsible for his young associates and he sought out Joe Lanza when he learned about the incident. Lanza told Valachi how Pat Pagano retrieved a gun and was about to shoot Joe Tortorici when Lanza stopped him, pointing out that Tortorici was too drunk to notice the gun. The significance of this observation is unclear but it stopped Pagano from shooting Joe Tortorici. Lanza claimed to have straightened the problem out but Valachi didn't agree and took his crew to confront Tortorici, who apologized and confessed he didn't know it was Joe's nephew he assaulted. This incident and Joe Valachi's statement about a similar pattern of behavior from Mike Coppola's faction tells us about the mafia environment the Felice brothers operated in.

Episodes of violence were common in East Harlem mafia circles.

Coppola was from Salerno province in Campania but had inherited the *decina* of Ciro Terranova from Corleone, whose half-brother Giuseppe Morello was the first known *capo dei capi* of the American mafia. The Coppola crew included remnants of Corleonese mafiosi like Joseph "Pip" Gagliano, John Schillaci, and the Bellomos, while Joseph Lanza himself was from Cerda, another town further east within the Palermo interior. A number of contemporary Genovese members had heritage in this region on the eastern side of the province and earlier Morello Family members, from which the Genovese Family split off, were from an assortment of towns surrounding Corleone and stretching eastward. Boss Salvatore "Charlie Lucky" Luciano was

himself from Lercara Friddi, a town in this region that produced other Genovese members, but by the 1930s the Coppola-led crew grew to include an increasingly “Americanized” element of pan-Italian hoodlums that reflected the cross-pollinated environment of East Harlem, these men united by broader Italian heritage and capacity for violence and crime, Mike Coppola’s promotion a representation of this “evolution” which had been occurring for years.

Valachi’s account of the Tortorici issue is similar to the description of events the “Capolla” brothers gave in 1936 when Peter Felice was killed in their establishment, describing his murder as a drunken dispute that escalated into gunfire. Valachi’s story also tells us Felice’s brother Freddy ran with an extremely tough crowd during his formative years given his close friendship with Mike Coppola, who was known to the media as “Trigger Mike”. Whether the murder of Petey Red Shirt was an earlier example of the Coppola crew’s ongoing habit of late-night violence recalled by Valachi or a separate example, the connection to the “Capolla” brothers is curious.

Freddy Felice had longstanding association with Mike Coppola.

Speculation surrounding Peter Felice's 1936 murder is opened even further by a similar event five years earlier. Felice survived a previous murder attempt in April 1931 at a Bronx dancehall, the Avon Social Club, where unknown assailants opened fire on Felice as he stood near the doorway watching a large group of dancing couples. The basement of the Avon club was said to be used for illegal mafia operations. After being shot in the head and eye, newspapers initially reported Peter Felice died from the severity of his wounds but Felice ultimately held onto life and true to his oath refused to cooperate with authorities following recovery.

Newspaper coverage of the 1931 shooting suggested it was in response to the October 1929 murder of an "Angelo Mollico" or “Molico”. Authorities and journalists commonly attempted to link underworld murders based on relatively thin evidence, so again a degree of skepticism is necessary when reviewing published accounts of this shooting. Research reveals no indication

who "Mollico" was nor whether his murder a year-and-a-half earlier played a role in the failed attempt on Peter Felice. Felice's arrest in 1930 for homicide shows he was suspected of violence himself during this period and perhaps the 1930 arrest was connected to the “Mollico” murder the previous year.

Peter Felice's association with Legs Diamond could have played a role in the 1931 shooting, too, as Diamond was murdered in December of that year. Newspaper coverage of the attempt on Felice’s life the previous April made no mention of Diamond, with their relationship referenced only after the murder of Felice in 1936. Peter Felice's Cosa Nostra membership can't be overlooked during these events either given the Castellammarese War was underway at the time of the first shooting and several other Gambino members were murdered between 1930 and 1931 in connection with the conflict.

Peter Felice's survival in 1931 was of course only temporary but whether the successful attempt on his life over five years later had any connection to his earlier shooting is unknown and perhaps unlikely. It does indicate there was an ongoing interest in killing Felice for reasons we may never know. Though he was not a high-ranking member, Peter Felice was noteworthy enough for Joe Valachi to remember his name and membership in the Gambino Family over 25 years after his death despite belonging to a different organization.

The 1931 shooting and 1936 murder of Petey Red Shirt did little to deter younger brother Freddy from involvement in mafia activity, which at the time of Peter's death was already ongoing and well-established. Freddy's deep involvement in Cosa Nostra circles is made evident by his 1935 arrest with Corleone-born mafioso Joseph "Pip the Blind" Gagliano, whose family had been involved with the Morello Family before its split into the Lucchese and Genovese. The younger Felice and Gagliano were arrested for their participation in a Long Island policy racket and Felice's wife Ida was also arrested in the operation along with Pip Gagliano's sister. Both women served as "hostesses" at a location used in the operation. Freddy Felice was arrested again three months later for the murder of ex-convict Harold "Shake" Brooks, true name Goodman.

Gagliano (far left) & Freddy Felice (far right) after their 1935 policy arrest.

Harold Brooks was allegedly killed in retaliation for his role in the kidnapping of Genovese member Battisto Salvo, identified at the time as a Bronx policy operator. The Salvo kidnapping, which occurred two months previous to the October 1935 murder of Brooks, was said to have provoked a total of three murders and the wounding of two additional men. Freddy Felice, who worked as a bartender at the time, was described as well-groomed, calm, and smiling while denying involvement in the Brooks murder following his arrest. Authorities acknowledged his relation to "Harlem gangster" Peter Felice, who would remain alive for another year.

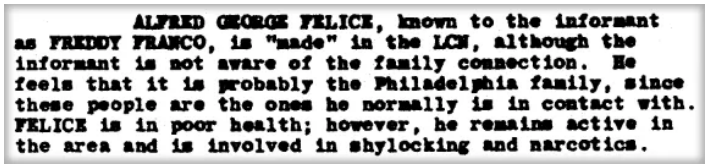
Though a witness claimed to have seen Felice and another man shoot Brooks and escape in a car, Freddy Felice escaped conviction for the Harold Brooks murder and like his associate Pip Gagliano pursued a career in the lucrative drug trade. In the 1940s Freddy Felice was described by investigators as an opium trafficker, bringing the substance in through Mexico to supply hidden laboratories. Felice was further identified as a wholesale heroin trafficker in a highly-organized network built by Cosa Nostra connections formed in East Harlem and the Bronx. Following a conviction for heroin trafficking in the 1940s, Freddy Red Shirt made the decision to live full-time in South Florida but did not leave his early connections behind.

Freddy Franco in Florida

Freddy Felice was established in Miami Beach by 1948 when he was arrested for vagrancy, mirroring the charge of his first arrest in Mount Vernon as a Bronx youth. Arrested with him on the vagrancy charge was Lucchese member Joseph Vento, a resident of Long Island. By this time Felice was more commonly known by the alias "Freddy Franco", the name most associates used when referring to him. Felice was arrested again in 1953 for a jewel robbery in Miami Beach and held on bail for these charges in Brooklyn. A man in Brooklyn named Mario Nicholo provided him bail after the jewel theft and interestingly shares his surname with today's Brooklyn Genovese member

Barry Nicholo. Freddy continued to accumulate petty charges in Florida as Freddy Franco throughout the 1950s while investing in night clubs and restaurants and by 1956 authorities believed he was a business partner of Frank DioGuardi, brother of the more infamous Lucchese member John “Johnny Dio” DioGuardi.

As a resident of South Florida, Freddy Felice maintained close ties to his New York roots not only in association with Genovese and Lucchese members in Miami but through his own physical presence. During trips to New York he was known to spend time in Manhattan near Times Square, with the FBN noting the Turf Restaurant on Broadway as one of Felice's NYC hangouts along with the Forest Hotel. The FBN gave no indication Freddy Felice had relationships with Philadelphia members in their early reports, noting only his association with New York mafia figures, particularly those with the Genovese Coppola crew. Felice’s friend Patsy Erra and his brother Michael were inducted into Cosa Nostra in 1949, both brothers sponsored by Mike Coppola, and Patsy established a residence in Miami Beach alongside Felice. The two men were inseparable for the remainder of their lives.

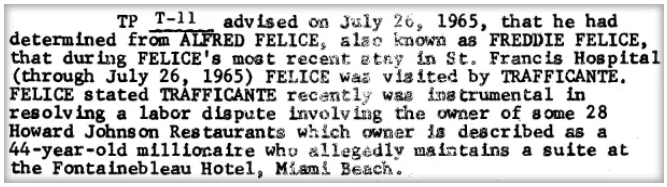

ALFRED GEORGE FELICE, known to the informant as FREDDY FRANCO, is "made" in the LCN, although the informant is not aware of the family connection. He feels that it is probably the Philadelphia family, since these people are the ones he normally is in contact with. FELICE is in poor health; however, he remains active in the area and is involved in shylocking and narcotics.

The FBI heard rumors of Felice’s Philadelphia membership.

Following widespread publicity after the 1957 Apalachin arrests and Joe Valachi's defection from Cosa Nostra in the early 1960s, the FBI intensified their investigation into the mafia and began to cultivate valuable underworld informants. Inevitably these contacts provided information on South Florida where the FBI first heard rumors Freddy Felice might be a Florida-based member of the Philadelphia Family, with a source noting Felice's close contact with unspecified Philadelphia members. Other informants were more confused by his affiliation, identifying Felice as a possible member of New York Families or even the Tampa-based Trafficante Family, the only group organic to Florida.

Though Felice was not a member of the Trafficante group and did not fit in with their heavily Sicilian *compaesani*-based membership from Agrigento, he maintained a close friendship with Santo Trafficante, as evidenced by a 1965 visit from Trafficante to a hospitalized Felice. Freddy Felice was recovering from a heart attack and a source reporting this visit said Santo Trafficante had recently resolved a significant labor dispute involving 28 different Howard Johnson Restaurants owned by a wealthy investor. The FBI's source didn't

clarify if this union matter was relevant to Felice, though rumors of his own labor influence in Florida and involvement in the restaurant and club industry suggest it was of casual interest to him if nothing else. A personal hospital visit from the Tampa *rappresentante* showed Freddy Felice was a significant figure in Florida mafia circles.



TP T-11 advised on July 26, 1965, that he had determined from ALFRED FELICE, also known as FREDDIE FELICE, that during FELICE's most recent stay in St. Francis Hospital (through July 26, 1965) FELICE was visited by TRAFFICANTE. FELICE stated TRAFFICANTE recently was instrumental in resolving a labor dispute involving the owner of some 28 Howard Johnson Restaurants which owner is described as a 44-year-old millionaire who allegedly maintains a suite at the Fontainebleau Hotel, Miami Beach.

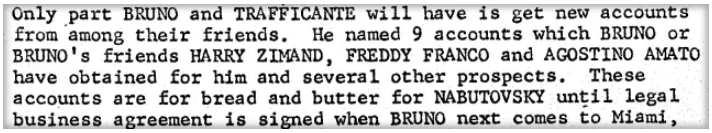
Santo Trafficante was a personal friend of Freddy Felice.

During this period the FBI learned of telephone contact between Freddy Felice and Trenton-based Philadelphia member Charles Costello in connection with Felice's ongoing health crisis. Costello maintained a presence in North Miami not far from Felice's residence in Miami Beach and was known to facilitate contact between Philadelphia, New Jersey, and Florida on behalf of his *capodecina* John Simone, who lived a significant part of the year in Miami's North Bay Village. Another Simone aide and close Costello associate, Carl "Pappy" Ippolito, was known to stay at the Fontainebleau Hotel in Miami Beach. Charles Costello was a trusted companion of Family boss Angelo Bruno, their close relationship flowing through blood ties going back to Sicily.

The FBI recorded Charles Costello updating his cousin Angelo Bruno on Freddy Felice's health status, describing how Felice recently called and told him he left the hospital only to be instructed by the doctor to return for further treatment. The FBI eventually carried Freddy Felice as a Philadelphia member active in Florida, Felice being the Family's only full-time resident in the area. They also provided clarification on his misidentification as a Trafficante Family member, noting how despite an earlier report listing them both as members of the Tampa-based Family, Felice and Stefano Randazzo were members of separate Families — Philadelphia for the former and Cleveland for the latter, Randazzo coming from Carini where Cleveland boss John Scalish also traced his heritage. However, there was close ongoing association beween the Philadelphia and Trafficante Families in Florida and Freddy Felice played a central role.

Charles “Pinky” Costello.

A source reported in 1962 how Angelo Bruno, Santo Trafficante, Freddy Felice, and Agostino Amato were involved together in a pest control company in Miami. Amato was a Florida-based Gambino member from Canicatti and previously lived in Manhattan where fellow Agrigento natives the Arcuris ran a powerful Gambino crew. The Arcuris effectively swapped places with the Amatos, having been early residents of Tampa where Santo’s father Santo Trafficante Sr. served as baptismal godfather to Joe Arcuri. Two of Agostino Amato's sons were Gambino members in Miami alongside their father.


Only part BRUNO and TRAFFICANTE will have is get new accounts from among their friends. He named 9 accounts which BRUNO or BRUNO's friends HARRY ZIMAND, FREDDY FRANCO and AGOSTINO AMATO have obtained for him and several other prospects. These accounts are for bread and butter for NABUTOVSKY until legal business agreement is signed when BRUNO next comes to Miami,

Felice was involved in pest control with Bruno, Trafficante, and Amato.

It should be noted the Trafficante Family only had jurisdictional authority over the Tampa area, with numerous sources describing South Florida, particularly Miami, as "open territory" where Cosa Nostra members could live and operate without directly consulting the local Family. As evidenced by the relationship with Angelo Bruno and Freddy Felice, Santo Trafficante's group was included in social and business affairs with these other Families, their presence in the state acknowledged as a matter of respect though it was not formally required.

As an open territory, the Miami area was a networking portal for national Cosa Nostra groups throughout America. FBI recordings of New Jersey leaders like Sam Rizzo DeCavalcante and Ray DeCarlo revealed how visits to South Florida were packed with nightly dinners, drinks, and card games between upper-echelon members. These social activities between full-time and part-time Florida residents as well as vacationing mafiosi provided a backdrop for organizational gossip, business deals, and formal updates.

Meetings between Commission members and their designated representatives began to occur in South Florida with increasing frequency by

the 1950s, with Genovese *messaggero* Anthony "Pussy" Russo caught on tape multiple times in the early 1960s updating Family leaders on official administrative changes in national Cosa Nostra Families following his Miami visits. South Florida naturally facilitated relationships between men who otherwise would have little to no direct contact with each other in their Family's main areas of operation.

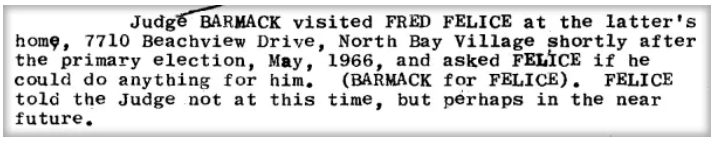
Felice's associates Max Eder (L), Patsy Erra (C), and Mike Coppola (R).

A source told the FBI in 1957 how Freddy Felice closely associated with Miami-based figures affiliated with the Cleveland, Detroit, Chicago, and Genovese Families. He noted how Felice did "considerable traveling" on behalf of these men in the mid-late 1950s, taking trips to New York, Philadelphia, and New Jersey. The source added how Freddy Felice and Genovese member Patsy Erra traveled to Cuba in connection with the business interests of Genovese *capodecina* Mike Coppola and associate Max Eder. When the FBI questioned Freddy Felice about these allegations directly, he admitted to a longtime friendship with Erra but denied doing traveling on behalf of other mafia figures.

Freddy Felice's influence in his town of Miami Beach was noted by 1958 when a source described his power over local union matters in partnership with Mike Coppola, Patsy Erra, and Max Eder. Felice's connections to top Chicago leaders became evident later when Felice was observed at a 1965 dinner in Hollywood, Florida, with Chicago Family leader Jackie Cerone and Genovese *capodecina* Jimmy Alo along with associates David Yaras and Peter Sarnoff. Virtually every observation of Freddy Felice showed him meeting with an assortment of Cosa Nostra figures from across the United States.

Freddy Felice provided social and practical value to the mafia network's Miami branch. A corrupt Florida judge, Donald Barmack, was identified as an associate of Freddy Felice. Judge Barmack visited Felice's Miami Beach home in 1966 following his recent election and volunteered to assist Felice with any favors he might need, with Felice reportedly telling the judge he had no need

at the moment but might in the future. Barmack would be convicted on charges of bribery in the early 1970s while still serving as a municipal judge.

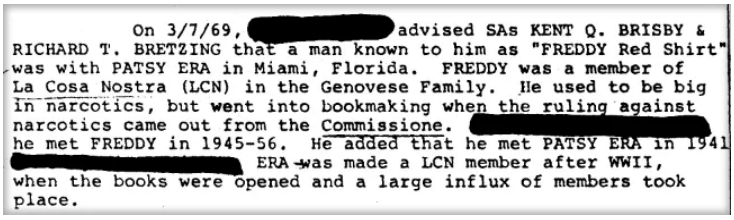


Judge BARMACK visited FRED FELICE at the latter's home, 7710 Beachview Drive, North Bay Village shortly after the primary election, May, 1966, and asked FELICE if he could do anything for him. (BARMACK for FELICE). FELICE told the Judge not at this time, but perhaps in the near future.

Felice's local influence included a corrupt municipal judge.

Freddy Felice was referenced by FBI informant Carmine Taglialatela, a former East Harlem figure like Felice. Taglialatela was inducted into a Lucchese Brooklyn crew in the 1950s by Paul Vario before fleeing to California following a conflict with Vario. He began secretly cooperating with the FBI in the 1960s and a 1969 report makes reference to "Freddy Red Shirt" as a member of the Genovese Family close to Patsy Erra in Florida. Carmine Taglialatela described Felice as a former narcotics trafficker who exited the trade when the Commission banned drug dealing, making a living through bookmaking instead.

Carmine Tagliatella recalled meeting Freddy Felice between 1945 and 1956, though it's unclear if he meant there was ongoing contact between the men spanning this decade or if he simply recalled meeting him at some unspecified point during this general period. The range of dates could also be a typographical error, with the FBI intending to write 1946 rather than 1956 to cap off the timeline. Regardless, Taglialatela would not become a made member of the Lucchese Family until late in the 1950s so his introduction to Felice would have been casual rather than a formal introduction between members, at least during the timeline described in the report.



On 3/7/69, [redacted] advised SAs KENT Q. BRISBY & RICHARD T. BRETZING that a man known to him as "FREDDY Red Shirt" was with PATSY ERA in Miami, Florida. FREDDY was a member of La Cosa Nostra (LCN) in the Genovese Family. He used to be big in narcotics, but went into bookmaking when the ruling against narcotics came out from the Commissione. [redacted] he met FREDDY in 1945-56. He added that he met PATSY ERA in 1941 [redacted] ERA was made a LCN member after WWII, when the books were opened and a large influx of members took place.

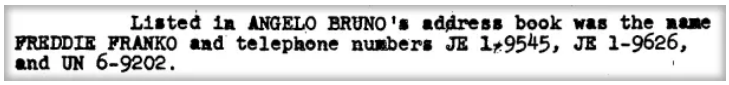
Lucchese informant Taglialatela was familiar with "Freddy Red Shirt".

Carmine Taglialatella's reference to Freddy Felice as a Genovese member who he initially met in the 1940s or 1950s could indicate Felice was first inducted into the Genovese Family and transferred. However, Taglialatela makes numerous mistakes when identifying the formal affiliation of members outside of the Lucchese Family, even those he knew more closely. Other sources similarly assumed Felice was a New York member given his close relationship to Patsy Erra, Mike Coppola, and countless members of the Genovese Family

and other New York groups. Though a membership transfer from the Genovese Family is possible given these connections, at the time of Taglialatela's interview in 1969 Freddy Felice was unquestionably a Philadelphia member and evidence of this formal arrangement dates back to at least January 1961.

Franco & Bruno

In 1961 the FBI obtained Philadelphia boss Angelo Bruno's address book, noting a listing for a "Freddy Franko" with telephone numbers for the Normandy Shores Golf Club and Midtown Social Club, both locations near Freddy Felice's home in Miami Beach. The FBI learned the Midtown club was a front for gambling operations run by Mike Coppola of the Genovese Family. Bruno's use of these numbers for contacting Freddy Felice indicates Felice spent significant time at these locations which is unsurprising given his close ties to Patsy Erra and Mike Coppola.

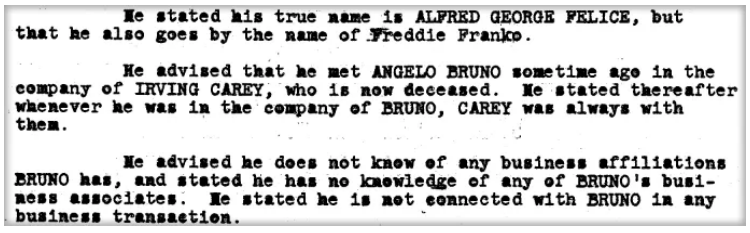


Listed in ANGELO BRUNO's address book was the name FREDDIE FRANKO and telephone numbers JE 1-9545, JE 1-9626, and UN 6-9202.

Felice was included in Angelo Bruno's personal address book.

Following the discovery of his well-known alias in connection to Angelo Bruno, the FBI interviewed Freddy Felice and inquired about his relationship with Bruno. Felice acknowledged use of the alias referred to in Bruno's address book and admitted to knowing Angelo Bruno, though he clarified he met Bruno through a deceased mutual associate, Irving Carey. Felice stated he was never in the presence of Angelo Bruno without Carey and denied having any knowledge of Bruno's business interests.

Research into Irving Carey reveals little in the way of leads, though perhaps Freddy Felice did originally meet Angelo Bruno through Carey. Irving Carey was non-Italian, but an initial introduction could have provided a foundation the two Italian men cultivated further through Cosa Nostra affiliation — assuming there was any truth to Freddy Felice's statements.



He stated his true name is ALFRED GEORGE FELICE, but that he also goes by the name of Freddie Franko.

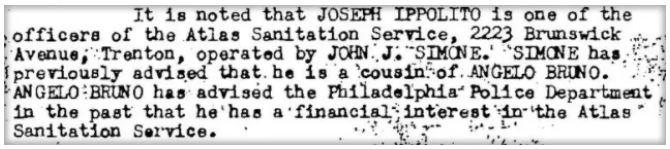
He advised that he met ANGELO BRUNO sometime ago in the company of IRVING CAREY, who is now deceased. He stated thereafter whenever he was in the company of BRUNO, CAREY was always with them.

He advised he does not know of any business affiliations BRUNO has, and stated he has no knowledge of any of BRUNO's business associates. He stated he is not connected with BRUNO in any business transaction.

Felice claimed to know Angelo Bruno through associate Irving Carey.

Felice's relationship with Angelo Bruno clearly went beyond this mutual acquaintance with Irving Carey and his tactful avoidance of deeper questions gives this information little weight in the grand scheme of Freddy Felice's relationship to Bruno. Felice denied having any telephone contact with Bruno and claimed ignorance as to why Angelo Bruno would have his contact information. He similarly expressed confusion over why phone numbers for the Normandy Shores and Midtown locations were linked to him.

The FBI came to learn Angelo Bruno had an interest in a newsstand at a Miami Beach apartment building, the King Cole Apartments. This newsstand was operated independently on the property and Bruno was also alleged to have arranged for an extermination company to handle work in the building. In addition to Bruno's interest in a pest control company with Santo Trafficante, Freddy Felice, and Agostino Amato, Angelo Bruno's son was in the extermination business in Philadelphia and New Jersey.


It is noted that JOSEPH IPPOLITO is one of the officers of the Atlas Sanitation Service, 2223 Brunswick Avenue, Trenton, operated by JOHN J. SIMONE. SIMONE has previously advised that he is a cousin of ANGELO BRUNO. ANGELO BRUNO has advised the Philadelphia Police Department in the past that he has a financial interest in the Atlas Sanitation Service.

Simone employed Ippolito's son at his sanitation company.

The FBI documented Angelo Bruno utilizing his position as a Cosa Nostra *rappresentante* to provide his son's company with advantageous extermination contracts, including an additional Florida partnership between Bruno's son and Santo Trafficante. Bruno's *capodecina* John Simone, who split time between Trenton and Miami, had also been a partner with New Jersey boss Sam Rizzo DeCavalcante in Atlas Sanitation & Extermination in Trenton, receiving choice contracts including the Trenton Police Department's headquarters. John Simone employed Pappy Ippolito's son Joseph as an officer at Atlas and Angelo Bruno admitted to being an investor.

The arrangement at Miami Beach's King Cole Apartments concerned a cigarette vending machine on the property along with the newsstand, suggesting Bruno's legal employment as a cigarette vending salesman played a role. FBI interviews revealed a "Freddy" was responsible for operating the newsstand on Bruno's behalf and after a source was shown a photograph of Freddy Felice, they learned it was Felice who was supervising this arrangement. A source stated Freddy Felice accompanied Angelo Bruno during one visit to the King Cole building.

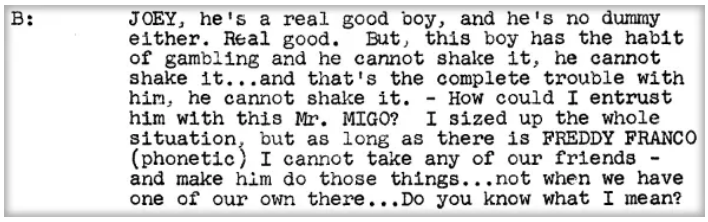
Felice supervised Bruno's interests at the King Cole Apartments.

Trenton-based Philadelphia member Charles Costello, noted earlier for his contact with Freddy Felice, kept a vacation home in North Miami. It was reported Angelo Bruno stayed in his cousin Costello's North Miami home when visiting South Florida, putting him in close proximity to Felice. A number of Angelo Bruno's relatives spent time in this part of Miami and Bruno himself owned property up the coast in Broward County, an investment that included his brother-in-law Peter Maggio and New York boss Carlo Gambino. Maggio was a *capodecina* in the Philadelphia Family in addition to his marital relation with Bruno, with Maggio's father Michael having sponsored Angelo Bruno into Cosa Nostra the decade previous.

During a January 1961 FBI recording of Angelo Bruno discussing his cigarette vending operations with former acting boss Domenico Pollina, Pollina suggested Bruno task someone with managing these interests in Florida on his behalf. In response, Bruno referenced "Freddy" and noted potential "trouble" in relation to someone else involved with this proposed arrangement. The person in question would cause money from the operation to "disappear", Bruno said. Bruno clarified this was not because the man would steal money, indicating he would lose the money through mismanagement rather than dishonesty. As a result, Bruno felt he had to travel to Florida on his own to conduct his cigarette vending business.

During this conversation the elderly Pollina was incredulous that Angelo Bruno could not find someone in the area to handle his interests for him. Bruno stated someone named "Joey" was a "good boy" and "no dummy" but had difficulty shaking a gambling problem, perhaps indicating he was the man referred to earlier who had trouble handling money. Bruno clarified that Freddy Franco was the "Freddy" he was discussing, a reference to Felice. Bruno said Freddy Felice was among "our friends" and "one of our own down there", a clear indication of Felice's Cosa Nostra membership in the Philadelphia Family. As is well-known, "friend of ours" and its variations are

used within the mafia to refer to fellow members and its meaning and context would have been well-understood in this conversation given the participants.



B: JOEY, he's a real good boy, and he's no dummy either. Real good. But, this boy has the habit of gambling and he cannot shake it, he cannot shake it...and that's the complete trouble with him, he cannot shake it. - How could I entrust him with this Mr. MIGO? I sized up the whole situation, but as long as there is FREDDY FRANCO (phonetic) I cannot take any of our friends - and make him do those things...not when we have one of our own there...Do you know what I mean?

Bruno referenced Felice as one of "our friends".

The fractured conversation is difficult to fully understand, though Bruno's comments indicate he was unwilling to utilize Freddy Felice in low-level cigarette vending activities on Bruno's behalf given Felice's status as a fully-initiated member. It appears Bruno was struggling to find an associate he could trust with these cigarette vending matters and the reference to Freddy Felice indicates Bruno wanted to use Felice in a supervisory role, not unlike Felice's role with the newsstand at King Cole Apartments. The conversation shows Bruno made a distinction between the duties expected of a made member opposed to those of an associate.

The conversation between Angelo Bruno and Domenico Pollina also made reference to an unspecified business deal involving Bruno, Pollina, Felice, and a man called "Filippo". Freddy Felice would take fifty percent while the other men split the remaining half. "Filippo" could have been Family *capodecina* Phil Testa, whose given name Bruno occasionally Italianized, or it may have been Domenico Pollina's brother Filippo, also a Philadelphia member. The references to Freddy Felice nonetheless indicate he was an inducted member of the Family by January 1961 and his name was familiar to Domenico Pollina, who previously held the acting boss position in 1959.

Franco & Dino

Though he was in poor health by the time his membership became known to the FBI, the ailing Freddy Felice was active in gambling, bookmaking, and loansharking operations in addition to operating the LaRue Club and Pine Tavern, both in Miami Beach. He previously operated the Bluebird Drive-In and Ciro's Night Club, both of which were closed by the 1960s. His reputation as a narcotics trafficker continued to follow him, though there were no further drug arrests following his full-time residence in Miami Beach. Carmine Taglialatela's comment about Felice leaving narcotics behind following the 1940s Commission ruling might well have been true.

Freddy Felice's South Florida social activities and nightclub ownership were not only significant in building relationships with Cosa Nostra members in the Miami area, but also with celebrities. Among Felice's close friends was Dean Martin of the Rat Pack. Martin, whose true name was Dino Crocetti, was noted for his indulgence in the nightlife and he spent time in South Florida, particularly Felice's territory in Miami Beach. Though Martin's collaborator Frank Sinatra was more well-known for his close relationships with national Cosa Nostra figures, Dean Martin was not without his own ties to these circles.

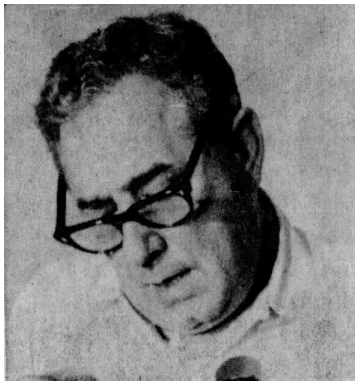
Dean Martin's Restaurant in Miami Beach.

Dean Martin was not simply a social acquaintance of Freddy Felice but also served as baptismal godfather to Felice's first son. Felice later opened a restaurant near Miami Beach named for Martin with the singer's permission. Dean Martin's Restaurant was a major hangout for Freddy Felice, Patsy Erra, and many of their associates. FBI surveillance logs show these men regularly meeting at the restaurant into the 1970s, with a collection of Felice's underworld friends coming and going in synchronized fashion. The restaurant would also receive violations for employing convicted felons in the establishment.

One published account details how Freddy Felice involved himself in Dean Martin's entertainment career in addition to using his name in the restaurant business. The story describes Felice arranging concerts on Martin's behalf and behaving in an unhinged, intimidating manner to "negotiate" for a large percentage of earnings from a series of Martin's concert performances. Freddy Felice was allegedly trying to take a larger cut of the money than Dean Martin himself was expected to receive. A related story referred to Felice as "Bruno's aide", noting his relationship to Angelo Bruno.

Freddy Felice also had close relationships to Rat Pack members Frank Sinatra and Sammy Davis Jr., the latter admitting later he once borrowed $2500 from

Felice around 1949. Davis however claimed he “knew nothing” about Freddy Felice’s underworld connections when asked by authorities and both Sammy Davis Jr. and Dean Martin claimed they only knew Felice by his “Freddy Franco” nickname. Davis did say that Freddy Felice once served as a “bodyguard” for him and his wife when they were threatened by Miami racists who opposed Sammy’s interracial marriage. Though these relationships were scrutinized by law enforcement in the late 1960s and 1970s they did not reveal anything particularly incriminating about the relationships between Felice and the Rat Pack.

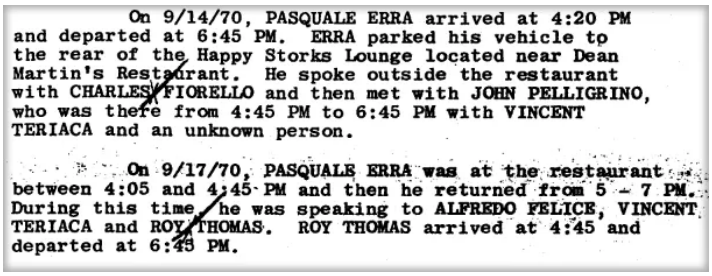


Freddy Felice was a close friend of both Martin and Sammy Davis Jr.

Dean Martin admitted he first met Freddy Felice around 1946 during a performance at the Club Royale in Detroit, revealing that in addition to Felice associating with Detroit Family members in Florida he actually visited Michigan proper. The singer also confirmed that Freddy Felice’s travels included Southern California, admitting Freddy Felice once visited him on a movie set in Hollywood in 1966. Martin was stressed by the inquiries into his relationship with “Freddy Franco” but was cautiously defensive of the gangster, stating Felice had only ever been kind to his family and he described Freddy as a “sweet, lovable man.” Martin told authorities that Freddy Felice’s criminal past and underworld reputation were previously unknown to him and tactfully indicated he would take this into account in future interactions but he was ultimately evasive, saying only that he and the Rat Pack maintained friendships with all kinds of people.

Evidence of Freddy Felice's relationship to Dean Martin is undisputed and Felice's constant presence at his own Dean Martin’s Restaurant is evident through FBI surveillance. There are enough accounts describing a social relationship between the men, with Martin and Sammy Davis Jr. admitting this themselves, and it's simple enough to conclude Dean Martin knew exactly who and what “Freddy Franco” was even if the function of their relationship was primarily social. Dean Martin's acquaintance with another figure in

Freddy Felice's network provides additional weight to stories of their relationship.



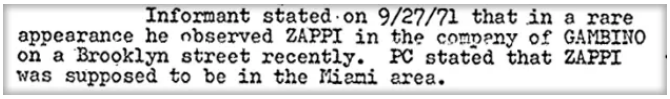
On 9/14/70, PASQUALE ERRA arrived at 4:20 PM and departed at 6:45 PM. ERRA parked his vehicle to the rear of the Happy Storks Lounge located near Dean Martin's Restaurant. He spoke outside the restaurant with CHARLES FIORELLO and then met with JOHN PELLIGRINO, who was there from 4:45 PM to 6:45 PM with VINCENT TERIACA and an unknown person.

On 9/17/70, PASQUALE ERRA was at the restaurant between 4:05 and 4:45 PM and then he returned from 5 - 7 PM. During this time, he was speaking to ALFREDO FELICE, VINCENT TERIACA and ROY THOMAS. ROY THOMAS arrived at 4:45 and departed at 6:45 PM.

Felice and Erra met associates at Dean Martin's Restaurant.

Los Angeles member Jimmy Fratianno was well-connected nationally, maintaining relationships with Cosa Nostra members throughout the West Coast, Midwest, and even New York City. Fratianno is not known for significant ties to Philadelphia, yet during his cooperation in the late 1970s he did identify a relationship with one Philadelphia member he knew — Freddy Felice. The men not only knew each other, they were partners in a legitimate business. Fratianno said Felice had been "with" Angelo Bruno's Family "for years".

Jimmy Fratianno told investigators he became a partner of Freddy Felice in an artichoke business during the mid-1970s, commenting during a 1981 hearing how Freddy Red Shirt Felice passed away around a year prior to Fratianno's testimony (Felice died in 1979). Another partner in the business identified by Fratianno was Gambino *capodecina* Ettore Zappi. A close neighbor and friend of boss Carlo Gambino, Zappi supervised a significant amount of the Gambino Family's Florida operations which naturally put him in proximity with Freddy Felice. The partnership with Zappi of the Gambino Family is evidence Felice maintained relationships to his brother Peter's former New York Family. Like Petey Red Shirt, Ettore Zappi was non-Sicilian and may have joined the Gambino Family during the same period.



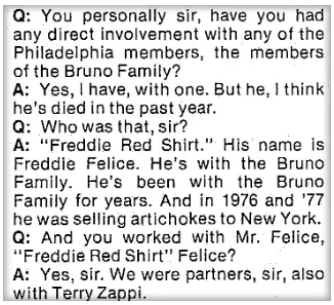
Informant stated on 9/27/71 that in a rare appearance he observed ZAPPI in the company of GAMBINO on a Brooklyn street recently. PC stated that ZAPPI was supposed to be in the Miami area.

Ettore Zappi was Carlo Gambino's main *capodecina* in Miami.

Recalling a trip to New York City in his memoir, Jimmy Fratianno attended a social gathering with a large group of high-ranking East Coast members in the Rainbow Room at Rockefeller Plaza around 1976. Along with the entire Colombo Family administration, Fratianno recalled seeing future Genovese underboss Benny "Eggs" Mangano, the Lucchese Family's Foceri brothers, Pittston Family boss Russell Bufalino, and Fratianno's business partners Ettore

Zappi and "Frankie" Felice. Though Fratianno used the wrong first name for Felice in this section, he referred to him by the nickname "Red Shirt" and identified Felice as a member of the Philadelphia Family under Angelo Bruno, as he did in his testimony.

Freddy Felice's given name is used correctly several pages later in Fratianno's book, describing how he became a partner with Felice and Ettore Zappi in the artichoke business. Jimmy says it was during this New York visit that he become involved in what he described as a "straight" (legal) business deal with Zappi and Felice, referring Freddy Felice to the "Parra Brothers" who grew artichokes on 5000 acres near Salinas, California. Fratianno's account of this deal gives us a glimpse into Freddy Felice's final years, showing him to be active with other national Cosa Nostra members during his trips to New York City, socializing and engaging in business with members of multiple Families.


Q: You personally sir, have you had any direct involvement with any of the Philadelphia members, the members of the Bruno Family?
A: Yes, I have, with one. But he, I think he's died in the past year.
Q: Who was that, sir?
A: "Freddie Red Shirt." His name is Freddie Felice. He's with the Bruno Family. He's been with the Bruno Family for years. And in 1976 and '77 he was selling artichokes to New York.
Q: And you worked with Mr. Felice, "Freddie Red Shirt" Felice?
A: Yes, sir. We were partners, sir, also with Terry Zappi.

Fratianno described his partnership with Felice and Zappi.

Jimmy Fratianno found a mutual celebrity acquaintance with his business partner Freddy Felice through Dean Martin. During his time as acting underboss for the Los Angeles Family, Fratianno traveled to New York and became involved with the Westchester Premier Theater in Tarrytown, a half-hour north from the Bronx. Jimmy Fratianno met Dean Martin through the latter's performances with the doomed theater. In addition to a widely-publicized photo showing fellow Westchester performer and Rat Pack member Frank Sinatra with Carlo Gambino, Jimmy Fratianno, and members of the Gambino and Colombo Families, a photo surfaced showing Dean Martin posing with Jimmy Fratianno backstage.

There is no evidence Freddy Felice was involved with the Westchester Premier Theater nor is he mentioned by Jimmy Fratianno at all in context with Dean Martin. It is evidence these circles overlap in multiple locations, though. Jimmy Fratianno was partners in a legitimate food enterprise with Carlo Gambino's Florida captain Ettore Zappi and Philadelphia member Freddy Felice, who once ran Dean Martin's Restaurant in Miami Beach. In turn, Fratianno had involvement with Dean Martin in the Westchester Premier

Theater where Carlo Gambino attended events and socialized with Rat Pack figures alongside Fratianno. The common connections speak for themselves.

Fratianno (L) socialized with Felice's friend Martin (R).

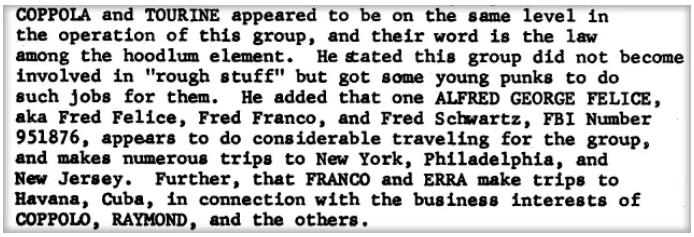
Aside from Freddy Felice, who Fratianno knew as "Freddy Red Shirt", the only other Philadelphia member Jimmy Fratianno expressed familiarity with was Frank "Blinky" Palermo. Palermo was a well-known boxing manager who like Felice had close relationships with celebrities of the era given the industry he operated in. Jimmy Fratianno's connection to two Philadelphia members outside of the Family's typical framework suggests these contacts came not through Philadelphia itself but the national network. Given Freddy Felice never lived in the Philadelphia Family's jurisdiction and his connections were overwhelmingly tied to New York, it's likely his membership in Philadelphia came solely via his base in South Florida.

Cutting Off Angelo Bruno's Legs

Heavy FBI infiltration and investigation into the Philadelphia Family during the 1960s and 1970s provides only glimpses of Family activities in Florida. Productive member informants like Rocco Scafidi and Harry Riccobene, both with deep Sicilian roots in the organization, had little to say about the group's South Florida presence, focusing their cooperation on local Philadelphia and South Jersey members and activities. Though the Philadelphia Family was not without its connections to other cities, its local relationships informed the vast majority of the Family's recruitment processes and the aforementioned member informants were functionally ignorant of most other national groups. For example, neither Scafidi nor Riccobene knew the Pittston Family existed despite sharing a state with them.

A solid Florida connection does come through the organization's primary member, Family *rappresentante* Angelo Bruno. By his own recorded admission on a 1963 FBI tape, Angelo Bruno was inducted into Cosa Nostra around 1951, less than a decade before becoming Philadelphia boss. Bruno was associated

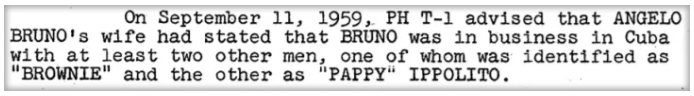
with the Family since the 1930s and by the time he became a member he was already regarded as one of the most well-connected and legitimately wealthy Philadelphia mafia figures, far outdoing even the group's top leaders. Angelo Bruno's status as a "self-made man" prior to becoming a made member in Cosa Nostra was evident via his investment in gambling casinos in the Caribbean. Bruno used Miami as an American base for his international interests.



COPPOLA and TOURINE appeared to be on the same level in the operation of this group, and their word is the law among the hoodlum element. He stated this group did not become involved in "rough stuff" but got some young punks to do such jobs for them. He added that one ALFRED GEORGE FELICE, aka Fred Felice, Fred Franco, and Fred Schwartz, FBI Number 951876, appears to do considerable traveling for the group, and makes numerous trips to New York, Philadelphia, and New Jersey. Further, that FRANCO and ERRA make trips to Havana, Cuba, in connection with the business interests of COPPOLO, RAYMOND, and the others.

Felice's trips to Cuba may have intersected with Angelo Bruno's interests.

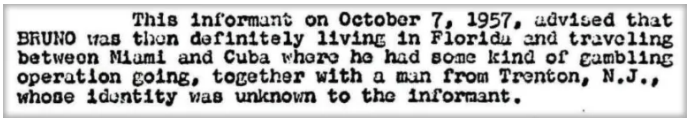
A Florida FBI informant noted how Freddy Felice traveled to Havana with Patsy Erra, allegedly on behalf of Genovese captain Mike Coppola. This informant did not appear to have direct involvement in these activities and may have been making a judgment based on general association, but he did tell the FBI Felice's trips included Philadelphia and New Jersey in addition to Cuba. Caribbean gambling casinos were noted for partnerships between multiple Cosa Nostra groups, making it more likely Felice was representing the Philadelphia organization's interests alongside his close friends in the Genovese Family. Trenton-based Philadelphia members Carl "Pappy" Ippolito and Charles "Pinky" Costello similarly traveled to the Caribbean in connection with these foreign casinos. Ippolito and Costello often served as representatives of Angelo Bruno in a variety of matters.



On September 11, 1959, PH T-1 advised that ANGELO BRUNO's wife had stated that BRUNO was in business in Cuba with at least two other men, one of whom was identified as "BROWNIE" and the other as "PAPPY" IPPOLITO.

Bruno's wife knew of his Cuban partnership with Ippolito.

The extent of Freddy Felice's involvement in these international operations and whether or not his activity in these matters predates his entry into the Philadelphia Family is neither confirmed nor denied in FBI reports covering Felice's activities. Angelo Bruno carried multiple phone numbers for Freddy Felice in his address book during his first year as boss, making it likely an ongoing relationship existed between the two men. Both Bruno and Freddy Felice shared a presence in the same parts of Miami as John Simone, making it a matter of probability these men crossed paths in the South Florida mafia network prior to our knowledge of their formal relationship. Angelo Bruno was heavily focused on South Florida at the time.

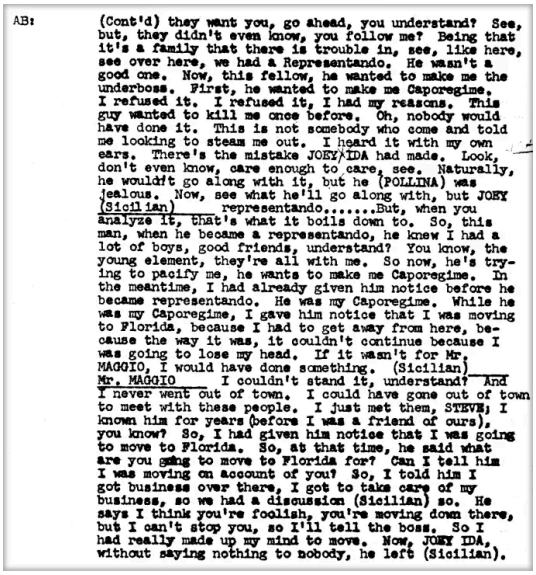


This informant on October 7, 1957, advised that BRUNO was then definitely living in Florida and traveling between Miami and Cuba where he had some kind of gambling operation going, together with a man from Trenton, N.J., whose identity was unknown to the informant.

Bruno was reportedly living in Florida by 1957.

Following his induction into the Philadelphia Family, FBI reports indicate Angelo Bruno ran into conflict with his *capodecina* Domenico Pollina over his activities in Florida and the Caribbean. Known primarily as "Mr. Migo", Domenico Pollina was an old time Sicilian from Caccamo who expressed little interest in activities outside of South Philadelphia. This tension between Bruno and Pollina escalated when Family boss Joe Ida absconded to Italy after fallout from the 1957 Apalachin affair. Ida eventually appointed Domenico Pollina acting boss and Pollina began making administrative changes to reinforce his position as heir apparent to the vacated *rappresentante* position.

Among the first decisions on Domenico Pollina's agenda was promoting his former soldier Angelo Bruno to a top position in the organization's hierarchy. Pollina offered Bruno the role of underboss and then *capodecina*, insisting that Bruno at least take the latter promotion if he wasn't willing to join the administration. Angelo Bruno was recorded discussing this exchange after becoming boss himself, recounting how he refused to accept promotion and planned to move full-time to Florida with no obligations in the Philadelphia area. Bruno wanted to live in Miami outside of the small-minded Pollina's grasp, citing his business interests as an excuse.



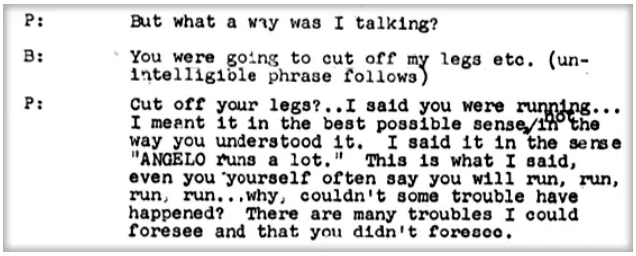
AB: (Cont'd) they want you, go ahead, you understand? See, but, they didn't even know, you follow me? Being that it's a family that there is trouble in, see, like here, see over here, we had a Representando. He wasn't a good one. Now, this fellow, he wanted to make me the underboss. First, he wanted to make me Caporegime. I refused it. I refused it, I had my reasons. This guy wanted to kill me once before. Oh, nobody would have done it. This is not somebody who come and told me looking to steam me out. I heard it with my own ears. There's the mistake JOEY IDA had made. Look, don't even know, care enough to care, see. Naturally, he wouldn't go along with it, but he (POLLINA) was jealous. Now, see what he'll go along with, but JOEY (Sicilian) representando.....But, when you analyze it, that's what it boils down to. So, this man, when he became a representando, he knew I had a lot of boys, good friends, understand? You know, the young element, they're all with me. So now, he's trying to pacify me, he wants to make me Caporegime. In the meantime, I had already given him notice before he became representando. He was my Caporegime. While he was my Caporegime, I gave him notice that I was moving to Florida, because I had to get away from here, because the way it was, it couldn't continue because I was going to lose my head. If it wasn't for Mr. MAGGIO, I would have done something. (Sicilian) Mr. MAGGIO I couldn't stand it, understand? And I never went out of town. I could have gone out of town to meet with these people. I just met them, STEVE; I known him for years (before I was a friend of ours), you know? So, I had given him notice that I was going to move to Florida. So, at that time, he said what are you going to move to Florida for? Can I tell him I was moving on account of you? So, I told him I got business over there, I got to take care of my business, so we had a discussion (Sicilian) so. He says I think you're foolish, you're moving down there, but I can't stop you, so I'll tell the boss. So I had really made up my mind to move. Now, JOEY IDA, without saying nothing to nobody, he left (Sicilian).

Bruno recalled his previous issues with Pollina and plan to settle in Florida.

Domenico Pollina naturally resented his subordinate Angelo Bruno's refusal to help administer the Family, an offer traditionally viewed as a high honor in addition to the significant responsibility it brings. Bruno was a rising star in

the organization, achieving financial autonomy while cultivating national relationships with other Families. On an FBI tape, Bruno stated he was close with Stefano Magaddino of Buffalo even before becoming a Cosa Nostra member. These strong traits can be an asset to the Family leadership as much as they can be a threat, the distinction between these judgments depending on how the member responds to the whims of Family leaders.

In response to Angelo Bruno's self-interested attitude and wide geographic interests, Domenico Pollina began making remarks to other Family leaders, among them *capodecina* Ignazio Denaro, about his desire to "cut off [Bruno's] legs". This particular phrase echoed throughout the organization's upper ranks and drastically increased the political tension between top members. Though Pollina later claimed this comment was a metaphor and he simply intended to limit Angelo Bruno's range of activity for Bruno's own benefit, Denaro reported the matter to the Commission with the support of other members who similarly favored Bruno over Pollina. The Commission was carefully monitoring the Philadelphia Family's brewing factionalism during the absence of Joe Ida and had yet to confirm Domenico Pollina as official *rappresentante*. They took great interest in Pollina's threatening remarks about the popular Bruno.



P: But what a way was I talking?

B: You were going to cut off my legs etc. (unintelligible phrase follows)

P: Cut off your legs?..I said you were running... I meant it in the best possible sense, not in the way you understood it. I said it in the sense "ANGELO runs a lot." This is what I said, even you yourself often say you will run, run, run, run...why, couldn't some trouble have happened? There are many troubles I could foresee and that you didn't foresee.

Pollina later tried to contextualize his "legs" comment about Bruno.

Following Ignazio Denaro's contact with the Commission, Domenico Pollina and Angelo Bruno were called to a Commission meeting in Wildwood, New Jersey, where Dominick Pollina was asked point blank about his problems with Bruno. Pollina adamantly denied there was any problem but Denaro testified against him during the Wildwood *arguimend*o, placing Pollina in a predicament with Cosa Nostra's own federal government. The Commission turned against Pollina and deposed him as interim boss, with Philadelphia Family leaders and the Commission in turn backing Angelo Bruno for the boss position.

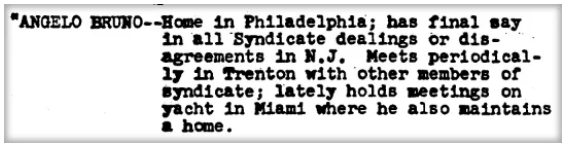
Angelo Bruno was ultimately elected not only to the position of Philadelphia *rappresentante* but also given a seat on the Commission. He rewarded Ignazio Denaro's loyalty by promoting him to official underboss. Angelo Bruno forgave the elderly Pollina and allowed his former captain to operate quietly in South

Philadelphia for the duration of his life, the two men remaining neighbors and personal friends. Domenico Pollina actually outlived the younger Bruno, who was murdered in 1980, with Pollina dying in 1993 after exceeding the age of 100. Philadelphia historian Celeste Morello interviewed Dominico Pollina late in his life and discovered Angelo Bruno's children helped take care of the senior citizen Pollina and his wife long after their father's murder.

Philadelphia's Well-Connected Trenton Crew

As the new boss of Philadelphia, Angelo Bruno's obligations both locally and nationally consumed much of his time, as evidenced on the January 1961 FBI tape of the new boss expressing anxiety over managing his Florida cigarette interests. Bruno still visited South Florida and remained involved in the area, but the Family's interests in Miami fell primarily to *capodecina* John Simone, known as "Johnny Keys" and "Casabalanca".

Alleged to be a cousin of Bruno himself, John Simone's Trenton-based *decina* included confirmed relatives of Angelo Bruno who operated as both men's most trusted associates. When Bruno arrived to the United States from Villalba as a baby, his family initially settled in a Trenton *compaesani* colony where his father Michael Annaloro (the family's true name) was living before moving to Philadelphia. His relatives remained in Mercer County and Trenton would grow increasingly relevant in Angelo Bruno's life when be became boss, supplying key vertebrae to the backbone of his Cosa Nostra organization. It was John Simone in Trenton and Miami whose influence provided Bruno with the most significant support.


"ANGELO BRUNO--Home in Philadelphia; has final say in all Syndicate dealings or disagreements in N.J. Meets periodically in Trenton with other members of syndicate; lately holds meetings on yacht in Miami where he also maintains a home.

The FBI knew of Bruno's ties to Trenton and Miami.

A 1962 FBI report refers to Angelo Bruno having "sent" John Simone to Trenton "about eight years" previous, though this account is unlikely when examining each man's background. Bruno was only recently inducted into Cosa Nostra during the period in question and both Bruno and Simone were soldiers of equal rank in the organization at the time. The idea of mafia figures "sending" subordinates to various locations is popular in outsider coverage of Cosa Nostra and has become inseparable from the organization's mythology, but extensive FBI cooperation and wiretapping reveals few situations where a member was ordered to settle in a new location.

When a member establishes himself in a new territory it is primarily through the member's own initiative and he often has existing ties to the area. He seeks approval and encouragement from the leadership, but is rarely if ever ordered to move somewhere. Aside from Angelo Bruno holding no rank over John Simone during most of the 1950s, Simone had been visiting Trenton for decades, long before he was part of the Philadelphia Family. Both he and Angelo Bruno's ties to Trenton came through their Sicilian heritage, a factor that can't be separated from the Trenton *decina* when examining its core members. Still, the report of John Simone moving to Trenton around 1954 may be accurate as he was living in Philadelphia the year previous where he and Angelo Bruno were arrested for operating an Italian lottery operation together.

Angelo Bruno (L) and John Simone (R).

John Simone was born in the small Pennsylvania mining community of Florence, near Pittsburgh, before his family migrated to Niagara Falls in Western New York. John Simone's father Michele, whose original surname was Mastrosimone in Villalba, Angelo Bruno's hometown, was deceased by the time John was a young man, Michele being over the age of fifty when John was born in 1911. Simone earned a reputation in underworld circles under Buffalo boss Stefano Magaddino, being arrested in various robberies and suspected of multiple murders in the area prior to moving to Trenton, most notably the 1943 slaying of George Meranto.

John Simone was visiting Trenton for years before his permanent move, as evidenced by a fatal New Jersey car accident in 1934 involving Simone and future members of his *decina*, including Carl "Pappy" Ippolito and Michael "Ponzi" Cammarata. Michael's brother Sam Cammarata was with them and another passenger, Sam Scozzaro, was killed in the collision. The men claimed to be on their way back from a social event in New York City when the accident occurred near Trenton.

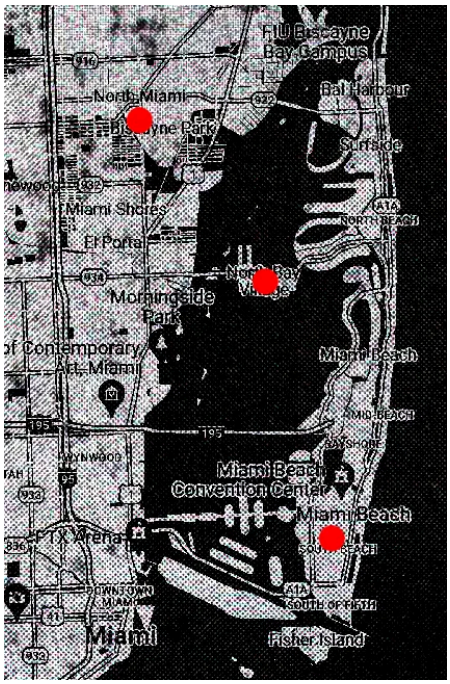
Identified as a Philadelphia member circa 1952 by FBI informant Harry Riccobene, John Simone's promotion to captain interestingly did not coincide directly with Bruno's ascent to Family boss despite their close relationship.

Simone was promoted earlier in 1959 when Domenico Pollina was still interim boss. John Simone's early ties to Western New York gave him strong relationships to other ex-Buffalo mafia figures, including future Cleveland boss John "Peanuts" Tronolone, who lived full-time in Miami and operated in the same circles as Freddy Felice. Cleveland underboss Angelo Lonardo identified Tronolone as a made member in Buffalo who transferred membership to Cleveland, which could indicate a similar arrangement occurred for Simone, though it's unknown if he was first inducted in Buffalo or Philadelphia. John Simone may have had his own ties to the Cleveland underworld prior to his friend Tronolone transferring to that Family, as he was arrested with associate Tony Pirinelli for the attempted robbery of a Cleveland tavern in 1935 after the owner shot the two would-be robbers.

John Simone established his reputation in Buffalo.

Often referred to as the Family's "Trenton" *capodecina*, it's true John Simone kept a home near Trenton and oversaw the Family's operations in Mercer County and Pennsylvania's Bucks County, though the reality of his *decina* was more expansive. In addition to representing members in Central New Jersey and Pennsylvania, Simone lived much of the year in Miami's North Bay Village. Some of the most significant members in his crew lived in Newark's "Down Neck" neighborhood and these men closely associated with members of other Families in New York and New Jersey, just as Simone did in Florida.

Central New Jersey itself included members from multiple East Coast Families, with DeCavalcante and Gambino members living alongside the Philadelphia crew in Trenton and Bristol where they operated near-harmoniously in various partnerships. John Simone had close relationships to Sam Rizzo DeCavalcante and Trenton-based Gambino member Nicky Russo who each oversaw the Trenton interests of their respective Families. Simone's crew was among the most nationally-connected groups within the Philadelphia Family and their various outposts along the East Coast played a central role in these relationships, as did Simone himself.



The area near Miami Beach hosted several Philadelphia members.

Though John Simone's presence in Miami became well-known by the 1960s and 1970s when he and countless New Jersey figures fled subpoenas and law enforcement scrutiny, his presence in the state went back much further. Records show the Simones' part-time residence in South Florida long predates John's residence in Trenton, with John Simone and his widowed mother splitting time between West Palm Beach and Niagara Falls by 1939. He wasn't the only family member involved in crime, either, as a relative of his sister's husband was among his criminal associates in Niagara Falls, Samuel Riggi. A Florida newspaper article from the late 1930s noted that John Simone and the Riggis were spending the winter at their West Palm Peach residence.

John Simone's consistent activity in the Miami area would continue for over 40 more years after his family established themselves in West Palm Beach, with reports from the 1970s describing how Simone held court in South Florida after moving his presence further south to North Bay Village. Simone even sold his Trenton home during this period, though he would acquire another in Lawrence Township. Along with his aides in the Philadelphia Family, Simone reportedly allowed Gambino member Nicky Russo to supervise their joint gambling operations in Trenton, giving Simone the freedom to focus more of his time in Florida. A report describes both John Simone and Freddy Felice using their respective homes in North Bay Village and Miami Beach to host meetings with other Cosa Nostra figures, their names mentioned side-by-side. The same report references Dean Martin's Restaurant.

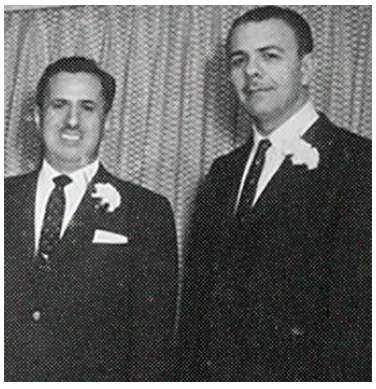
2. That two other establishments to wit: Dean Martin's Restaurant and Lounge and Jilly's South violated the beverage laws of the State of Florida by employing known convicted felons to work in the places of business in violation of the laws of the State of Florida.

3. That Joseph Anthony Indelicato, Albert Le Pore, Dominic Mantell and Patsy Era who are known Mafia members and that Alfredo George Felice, Frank Ippolito, William Dentamora, John Simone, Anthony Russo, Hy Gordon, Edward John McGrath and David Iacovetti who are known Mafia associates, either live or are permitted to hang around and carry on their illicit activities in and around North Bay Village. These persons have used the gas station of Jimmy Varrone as a gathering and meeting place on an average of three to four times a week and have also used the residences of John Simone and Alfredo George Felice for meetings. That said Jimmy Varrone has visited the residence of Felice.

Simone and Felice used their Miami homes to host Cosa Nostra meetings.

Though he continued to maintain his New Jersey residence in Lawrence Township near Trenton, John Simone utilized members of his *decina* like Pappy Ippolito and Charles Costello as designated representatives who traveled between New Jersey and Florida on his behalf. Reports indicate Ippolito and Costello both served alternately as acting captains for John Simone when he was unavailable and Costello was something of a secretary for boss Angelo Bruno, making travel arrangements and serving as Bruno's driver in Florida. Middlemen aside, John Simone was explicitly identified as a close associate of Freddy Felice in Miami when both men resided there.

In addition to familial ties in Sicily, Angelo Bruno served as best man at Charles Costello's wedding and Costello allowed Bruno to use his name and identity when traveling. Costello's vacation home in North Miami near the homes of John Simone and Freddy Felice provided Angelo Bruno with a base in Miami that facilitated contact with local members of his own Family in addition to national leaders who preferred to meet in South Florida. Along with operating a vending machine business, Costello supplemented his living through significant gambling operations in partnership with Simone and other Philadelphia members.

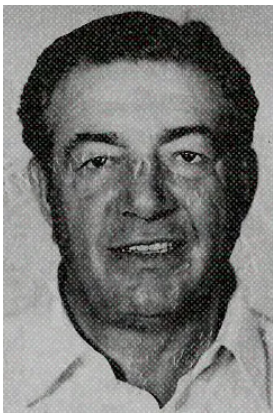


Costello family photo of Charles Costello (L) and Angelo Bruno (R).

Charles Costello's son Joseph would eventually be inducted into the organization under Angelo Bruno's leadership and an FBI report from 1969 indicates his other son Charles Jr. was proposed for membership by John Simone, though the induction of this other Costello son apparently never took

place for reasons unknown. Joe Costello shot a man to death at the offices of JC Vending in 1961, a business operated by Charles Costello and both of his sons. Joe would plead guilty to a lesser charge and avoid incarceration for the murder.

Charles Costello (true spelling Castello) and Pappy Ippolito were both relatives of Angelo Bruno who like him descended from Villalba in Caltanissetta province, Costello being Bruno's cousin through a blood relation between grandparents while Ippolito's relation came via marriage. Incredibly, Pappy Ippolito's mother was a first cousin of infamous Villalba boss and town mayor Calogero Vizzini, her maiden name also being Vizzini. Law enforcement identified an associate of the Trenton *decina* as Angelo Vizzini, a maternal first cousin of Pappy Ippolito, and at least two other Vizzinis were identified in connection with the crew.

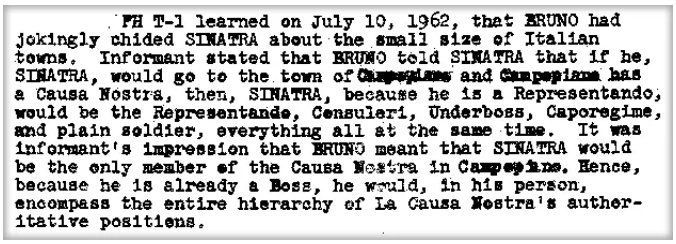


Pappy Ippolito was related to mafia bosses in the US and Sicily.

Angelo Bruno and his mother arrived to Trenton from Villalba in 1911 with an aunt named Vizzini, this being her maiden name before marrying the brother of Angelo's father Michael. The brothers were living at the same Trenton address and both of their wives and children were joining them there. This aunt was the sister of Pappy Ippolito's mother, meaning Angelo Bruno came to America with a cousin of Calogero Vizzini.

Showing the extent of these Sicilian mafia roots, Angelo Bruno was also a first cousin of Vallelunga boss Calogero Sinatra and the two men visited each other on both sides of the Atlantic in the 1960s while each held their respective positions of boss in America and Sicily. Angelo Bruno and Calogero Sinatra's mothers were sisters and like Calogero Vizzini's municipal duties in neighboring Villalba, Sinatra was a town councillor in Vallellunga. Joe DiCarlo Sr., the first known Cosa Nostra boss in Buffalo, descended from Vallelunga, as did early members of his Family. Villalba and Vallelunga practically overlap, sitting right next to each other in Caltanissetta province.

Though Angelo Bruno's Philadelphia Family was among the largest Cosa Nostra groups outside of New York, he joked on an FBI recording how his cousin Calogero Sinatra could hold all of a Sicilian Family's formal ranks at once due to how small the groups were over there. Putting humor aside, numerous sources have explained how a Family's size is of little political consequence when it comes to official recognition in Cosa Nostra, especially in Sicily where organizations can start with ten members and become even smaller through attrition. *Pentito* Tommaso Buscetta told Italian authorities how a Sicilian Family could have only one remaining member who would continue to be regarded as the local *rappresentante* by other Cosa Nostra groups.



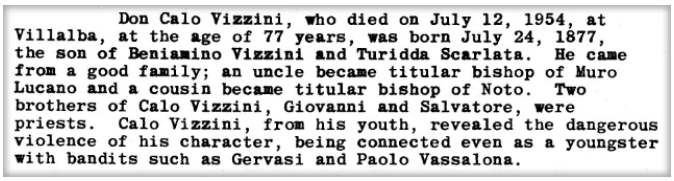
FH T-1 learned on July 10, 1962, that BRUNO had jokingly chided SINATRA about the small size of Italian towns. Informant stated that BRUNO told SINATRA that if he, SINATRA, would go to the town of [redacted] and [redacted] has a Causa Nostra, then, SINATRA, because he is a Representando, would be the Representando, Consuleri, Underboss, Caporegime, and plain soldier, everything all at the same time. It was informant's impression that BRUNO meant that SINATRA would be the only member of the Causa Nostra in [redacted]. Hence, because he is already a Boss, he would, in his person, encompass the entire hierarchy of La Causa Nostra's auther-itative positions.

Bruno joked with Sinatra about the small size of Sicilian organizations.

Italian authorities forwarded surveillance logs of Angelo Bruno to the FBI following his trip to Sicily and noted a dinner attended by Bruno, Calogero Sinatra, and several other men from the area near Sinatra's home in Vallelunga. The other men in attendance were identified as Cosa Nostra figures in this part of Caltanissetta province. It's possible the guests at this dinner party comprised most of the local mafia membership under Sinatra given Bruno joked about the small size of Sicilian Families, an observation confirmed by many Sicilian *pentiti* in subsequent years. Humor is often rooted in truth.

I'm unable to clarify whether the Villalba and Vallelunga mafia groups operated as one entity under Calogero Sinatra or if they had separate designation in Cosa Nostra, as there are examples of small neighboring villages with their own distinct Families just as there are some who operate as one depending on the political arrangement in the area. An Italian report on the 1980s Sicilian mafia war identifies leading members from both Villalba and Vallelunga supporting the vengeful Corleonesi faction under Salvatore "Toto" Riina whereas men from other neighboring Caltanissetta villages are said to have supported Riina's rivals Stefano Bontate and Gaetano Badalamenti. Whether they were one Family or separate, Villalba and Vallelunga appear to have at least shared political loyalties during a time of great violence and strife.

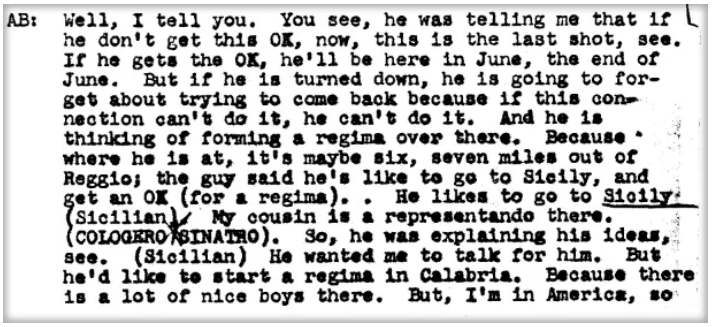
Today Vallelunga holds the seat of the *mandamento* (mafia district) and the village of Villalba falls under its jurisdiction though available reports are still unclear about Villalba's formal independence. *Pentito* Francesco DiCarlo from Altofonte visited Caltanissetta province as a new member in the 1960s and met with influential members from Villalba. While discussing this visit, DiCarlo described how the *capomandamento* of the area was an elderly man who had a great deal of respect in Cosa Nostra — his name was Angelo Annaloro, the same as Angelo Bruno's birth name. Whether this obscure but influential man was an older relative of Angelo Bruno remains unconfirmed but it's a striking coincidence given Bruno descended from the area and was related to local bosses Calogero Vizzini and Calogero Sinatra.


Don Calo Vizzini, who died on July 12, 1954, at Villalba, at the age of 77 years, was born July 24, 1877, the son of Beniamino Vizzini and Turidda Scarlata. He came from a good family; an uncle became titular bishop of Muro Lucano and a cousin became titular bishop of Noto. Two brothers of Calo Vizzini, Giovanni and Salvatore, were priests. Calo Vizzini, from his youth, revealed the dangerous violence of his character, being connected even as a youngster with bandits such as Gervasi and Paolo Vassalona.

Legendary Villalba boss Calogero Vizzini came from a reputable family.

Calogero Sinatra was undoubtedly familiar with Calogero Vizzini in neighboring Villalba prior to the senior *rappresentante*'s death the decade previous. Vizzini's name is well-known even to total outsiders given his notoriety and influence during and after World War II, with Vizzini said to have assisted the Allied invasion of Italy. Angelo Bruno's marital connection to Vizzini and blood relation to Sinatra would have only increased his stature in Sicily. High-ranking *pentito* Antonino Calderone described Angelo Bruno in glowing terms when recalling a visit with Bruno during the latter's early 1960's Sicilian travels; Calderone's brother was the boss of Catania and the men were well-acquainted with Calogero Sinatra.

Calogero Sinatra's status was recognized in Sicily and the United States, with Angelo Bruno describing on one tape how Sinatra took him to Palermo during a trip to Sicily and facilitated introductions to a dizzying number of mafia bosses. Sinatra was similarly greeted by Angelo Bruno and Carlo Gambino's brother Paolo when he arrived in New York for his 1962 tour of America. A dinner was held in New York City between the visiting Vallelunga boss and the Commission, where Bruno sought and received permission to formally introduce his cousin to the membership of the Philadelphia Family at a large gathering. Calogero Sinatra also visited mafia leaders in other US cities during his 1962 visit, including Buffalo where he had *compaesani*.



AB: Well, I tell you. You see, he was telling me that if he don't get this OK, now, this is the last shot, see. If he gets the OK, he'll be here in June, the end of June. But if he is turned down, he is going to forget about trying to come back because if this connection can't do it, he can't do it. And he is thinking of forming a regima over there. Because where he is at, it's maybe six, seven miles out of Reggio; the guy said he's like to go to Sicily, and get an OK (for a regima). . He likes to go to Sicily (Sicilian) My cousin is a representando there. (COLOGERO SINATRO). So, he was explaining his ideas, see. (Sicilian) He wanted me to talk for him. But he'd like to start a regima in Calabria. Because there is a lot of nice boys there. But, I'm in America, so

Bruno's cousin Sinatra was a Sicilian boss and point of contact for Joe Ida.

When former Philadelphia boss Joe Ida returned to his native Calabria, Calogero Sinatra served as a point of contact for him in Sicily and Ida amazingly sought permission from Angelo Bruno to form a Philadelphia Family *decina* based in mainland Italy comprised of local Calabrian recruits. An arrangement like this required approval from the Sicilian mafia's leadership so Bruno suggested Ida contact Calogero Sinatra for help with the audacious plan, though unsurprisingly it never came to fruition. There were several recorded incidents where Angelo Bruno emphasized the importance of following proper protocol when it came to interactions with Sicily.

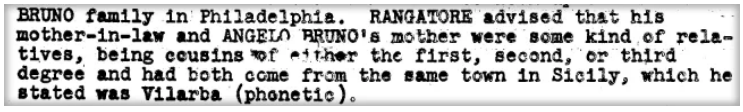
Calogero Sinatra's contact with his cousin Angelo Bruno caused him significant grief with the Italian government back home. After returning to Sicily he was exiled to Northern Italy for a period of four years because of his contact with American Cosa Nostra figures. Sinatra was carried by Italian authorities as an influential rank-and-file member of the Vallelunga Family in later decades, indicating he stepped down as *rappresentante* or perhaps lost the position during his northern exile although one Italian report identified him as the *consigliere*. His nephew Salvatore Fraterrigo was arrested in 2007 after a period as a fugitive, showing these bloodlines have continued in Caltanissetta to present day.

Though a direct blood relation between Angelo Bruno and John Simone can't be substantiated through available records, Simone's parents did descend from Villalba like Bruno and the other Trenton members. Simone's earlier residence in Niagara Falls is similarly linked to his heritage, with the original Buffalo Family being made up heavily of men from neighboring parts of Caltanissetta as described above. These *compaesani* ties played a role in the relationship between Philadelphia and Buffalo when Angelo Bruno became boss.

Sam Rangatore was a liaison between Buffalo and Philadelphia.

One of the Buffalo members John Simone maintained a close relationship with long after leaving Western New York was Sam Rangatore, a top aide to boss Stefano Magaddino who served as the formal liaison between the Buffalo and Philadelphia Families. Simone and Rangatore were arrested together in 1934 and charged with grand larceny of an automobile after authorities disrupted a meeting of underworld figures in Scranton, Pennsylvania. Over 30 other men were arrested at the meeting and authorities confiscated firearms and counterfeit money. Simone, Rangatore, and two other Western New York residents who were arrested with them in Scranton were referred to as "counterfeiters".

Scranton fell under the Pittston Family's jurisdiction and the local mafia group was dominated by men from Caltanissetta province like Simone. John Simone's early travels in the American mafia network between Niagara Falls, Trenton, and Scranton were evidently linked to his hometown *compaesani* like so many mafiosi from Simone's generation and older. Sam Rangatore's family came to Niagara Falls from Trabia in Palermo province and there was a mafia colony from Trabia in Western Pennsylvania in the same general region where John Simone was born, this colony producing Pittsburgh members from Trabia like the Limas. The Rangatores had ties to Johnstown, PA, where the Limas once lived and Tony Lima later told the FBI that Johnstown had once been its own distinct *borgata* separate from Pittsburgh earlier in American mafia history. Whether this was coincidental or not, a more significant connection is evident: Rangatore revealed in an FBI interview that his mother-in-law was a relative of Angelo Bruno from Villalba, the same town his friend John Simone's parents came from. Rangatore represented the Buffalo Family at the marriage of Angelo Bruno's daughter in 1962.


BRUNO family in Philadelphia. RANGATORE advised that his mother-in-law and ANGELO BRUNO's mother were some kind of relatives, being cousins of either the first, second, or third degree and had both come from the same town in Sicily, which he stated was Vilarba (phonetic).

Rangatore's mother-in-law was related to Angelo Bruno.

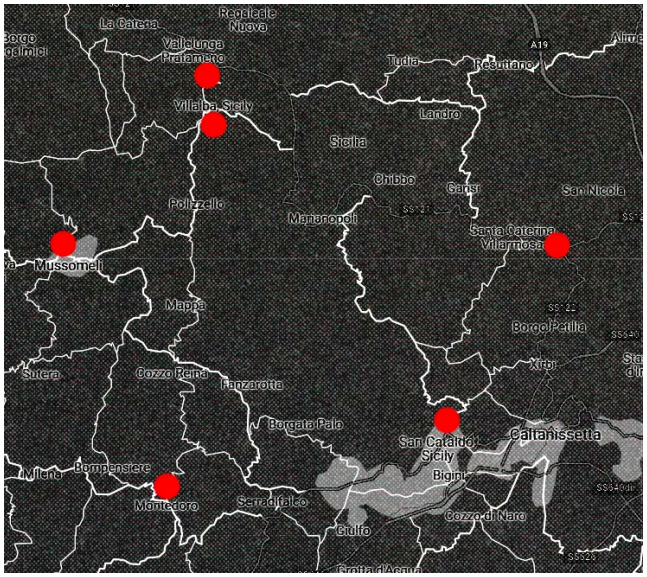
There were other members of John Simone's *decina* from Caltanissetta in addition to those already mentioned. Michael Amico was from the same part of Caltanissetta province, though he didn't descend from Villalba. He was born in Mussomeli, a short trek to the southwest. Mussomeli is most well-known for producing Cosa Nostra boss Giuseppe Genco Russo, an influential contemporary and peer of Calogero Vizzini, the two men serving as the mafia's highest representatives in the province.

Michael Amico initially lived near Passaic, New Jersey, before moving to Trenton. A powerful mafioso in early Rochester, New York, was a Pasquale Amico who came from Caltanissetta, showing if nothing else Western New York mafia figures descended from the same region and shared common surnames with the Trenton group, John Simone having lived in both areas and traveled between them. Pasquale Amico's son was active with the mafia in Rochester, being named Michael like this one.

Michael "Ponzi" Cammarata, another Trenton *decina* member, descended from Villalba and was born near Pittsburgh like John Simone. Cammarata's mother's maiden name was in fact Mastrosimone and like John Simone's family she too shortened it to Simone. Between their shared Western Pennsylvania origins, the 1930s New Jersey car accident involving the Cammarata brothers and a visiting John Simone, and the common Mastromarino surname, we can infer that Michael Cammarata and John Simone were relatives.

The Cammaratas moved to Trenton less than a decade after Michael's birth and their surname shows up in connection with Vizzinis like we see from Angelo Bruno and Pappy Ippolito. The street the Cammaratas moved to in Trenton was the same one Bruno's father Michael Annaloro lived on, where young Angelo arrived when he came from Villalba. Angelo Bruno served as a pallbearer at Michael Cammarata's funeral in 1963, an indication of their close relationship. Prior to his death, Cammarata was visited in the hospital by Bruno, Simone, and most of the Trenton *decina*.

There are also family connections between the Cammaratas and a Villalba surname the Simone family would marry into in Niagara Falls, the Riggis. As noted earlier, Samuel Riggi associated with John Simone in criminal activity during his time in Western New York and Simone's sister married another Riggi, Benjamin. The Riggis in Niagara Falls unsurprisingly had their own ties to the Villalba *compaesani* colony in Trenton, though they did not follow John Simone there. The majority of Simone's relatives stayed in Niagara Falls for the remainder of their lives.



Key Trenton members were part of the Caltanissetta mafia network.

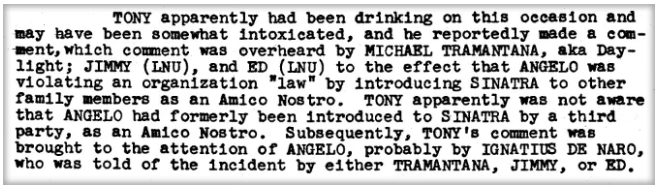
Trenton member Michael “Daylight” Tramontana was yet another part of this group whose family came from Villalba, with his parents marrying in a Western Pennsylvania town neighboring the one where Michael Cammarata was born. There were at least two men with Michael Salvatore Tramontana’s exact first, middle, and last name as well as birth year in Trenton, likely first cousins. They both lived in Lawrence Township like John Simone, too. Distinction can be made through their year of death — the Cosa Nostra member died in 1981 while his cousin died two years previous, in 1979. The cousin’s obituary interestingly says he was born in Scranton, where John Simone was arrested in 1934.

The Michael Tramontana who joined the Philadelphia Family had a long rap sheet, including robbery, hijacking, and bootlegging dating back to Prohibition. He was arrested in 1932 as a material witness to murder after he and Michael Cammarata were linked to the scene of a bootlegging associate’s violent death in Trenton and the following year he was arrested again after assaulting someone with a pistol. Tramontana was born in Jersey City, with the family moving to Trenton before World War I. The obituary for Michael’s father Salvatore Tramontana shows relation to the Vizzinis, as we see with the other members from Villalba. Michael Tramontana’s mother was born in the village of Cammarata in Agrigento, which is near Villalba on the border between the two provinces. This nearby town may have influenced the Cammarata surname found in Villalba, as evidenced by Michael Cammarata.

Tramontana's father Salvatore (pictured) came from Villalba.

Michael Tramontana was involved in a Philadelphia Family controversy in 1962 when Angelo Bruno's cousin Calogero Sinatra was visiting from Vallelunga. During or after the large meeting where Angelo Bruno formally introduced the Vallelunga boss as an *amico nostra* to the members of his Family, Tony Perella of Vineland drunkenly commented to other members how Angelo Bruno violated a rule against introducing Sicilian mafia members to Americans. Rumors of this rule were echoed by select sources, including Joe Valachi, with the edict apparently coming from Charlie Luciano after moving to Italy. Luciano allegedly claimed Sicilian members were untrustworthy.

This rule against introducing Sicilian Cosa Nostra members to their American counterparts may have been followed within the Genovese Family, but there are numerous accounts proving it was not followed by the Bonanno, Gambino, DeCavalcante, and Philadelphia groups, nor was it followed by many smaller US Families with strong Sicilian connections. Michael Tramontana was one of the men Tony Perella complained to and Tramontana or another man who heard the conversation reported the matter to Bruno. Angelo Bruno called Tony Perella to his office and the men engaged in a debate, with Bruno lecturing his underling on various points related to this issue.



TONY apparently had been drinking on this occasion and may have been somewhat intoxicated, and he reportedly made a comment, which comment was overheard by MICHAEL TRAMANTANA, aka Daylight; JIMMY (LNU), and ED (LNU) to the effect that ANGELO was violating an organization "law" by introducing SINATRA to other family members as an Amico Nostro. TONY apparently was not aware that ANGELO had formerly been introduced to SINATRA by a third party, as an Amico Nostro. Subsequently, TONY's comment was brought to the attention of ANGELO, probably by IGNATIUS DE NARO, who was told of the incident by either TRAMANTANA, JIMMY, or ED.

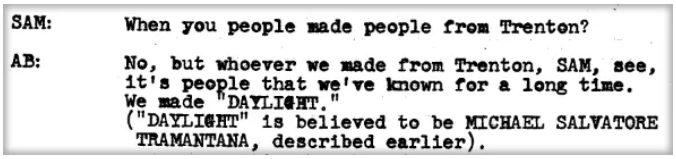
Tramontana witnessed Perella's complaints about international protocol.

Interestingly, Angelo Bruno and Tony Perella seemed to be arguing different points and talking past each other in the tape's transcript. Perella tried to point out how there was a rule against formally introducing Sicilian members to Americans, while Bruno seemed to believe Tony Perella's complaint was based on an assumption that Bruno violated the third party introduction rule, thinking Perella was accusing him of not having been formally introduced to his cousin himself before introducing Calogero Sinatra to Philadelphia

members. Angelo Bruno appeared to be oblivious to any kind of rule or guideline preventing Sicilian and American members from being formally introduced and Bruno's travels to Sicily show he was officially introduced to men throughout the island and in turn made introductions between his cousin Sinatra and countless American members.

Angelo Bruno explained to Tony Perella how the Commission themselves had an official dinner with Calogero Sinatra, approving Angelo Bruno to introduce his cousin in America. Bruno was less bothered Tony Perella raised this issue on its own and more disturbed by Perella doing it behind his back, telling Tony he had the right to question Bruno's conduct but should address it with Bruno directly rather than complain to others, in this case a group that included Bruno's *compaesano* Michael Tramontana. Given the deep ties men like Angelo Bruno and Michael Tramontana had with the mafia element from Villalba and Vallelunga, this faction having relation to two Sicilian bosses, it is perhaps no surprise these international introduction guidelines encouraged by Charlie Luciano were meaningless to them, just as evidence shows this so-called "rule" meant nothing to most American bosses with Sicilian mafia heritage.

Michael Tramontana's last known arrest was in 1943 for failing to register as a criminal in the town of Hammonton in South Jersey, and by the 1960s he was operating a dry cleaning business in Trenton. The FBI connected him to all of the well-known names from John Simone's *decina* along with Pappy Ippolito's cousin Angelo Vizzini and another Vizzini named Daniel, both associates of the crew. Michael Tramontana was discussed by Angelo Bruno and former Trenton resident Sam Rizzo DeCavalcante on a 1962 FBI bug, Bruno stating he knew "Daylight" for many years before the latter's induction into Cosa Nostra.



SAM: When you people made people from Trenton?

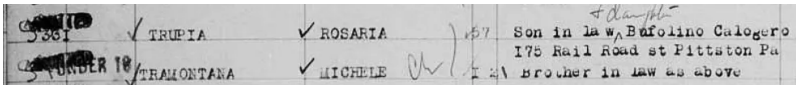
AB: No, but whoever we made from Trenton, SAM, see, it's people that we've known for a long time. We made "DAYLI@HT." ("DAYLI@HT" is believed to be MICHAEL SALVATORE TRAMANTANA, described earlier).

Bruno discussed Tramontana's induction with DeCavalcante.

The alleged Scranton birth of Daylight Tramontana's cousin Michael provides an interesting connection. A Michael Tramontana identical in age to the two Trenton men arrived in America from San Cataldo in 1920, this Tramontana family listing their arrival contact as a Calogero Bufalino in Pittston, a brother-in-law. Calogero Bufalino was the name of future Pittston boss Russell Bufalino's brother as well the name of an uncle, the latter being among the local Family's earliest members. The Bufalinos came from Montedoro,

which neighbors San Cataldo. Both towns form a triangle with Villalba and Vallelunga, with many connections between the towns.

A mafia connection with these Pittston-connected Tramontanas is made clear through Calogero Bufalino's address: 175 Railroad Street. In addition to the Tramontanas' in-law Calogero Bufalino residing at this address in 1920, the founding Pittston mafia leader Stefano LaTorre was living there at the time and this house was targeted by dynamite that year. LaTorre was a close associate of the Bufalinos, indicating this set of Tramontanas were already connected to top mafia figures in San Cataldo and Montedoro when they arrived in America. However, these Tramontanas cancelled their Pittston destination at the last minute and instead went to Rochester in Western New York, the region John Simone's family moved to.



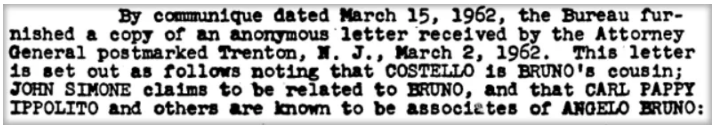
Tramontanas listed a name and address linked to the Pittston Family.

John Simone's 1934 arrest in Scranton with Sam Rangatore does not appear to be a random event if this other Michael Tramontana with Bufalino relatives in Pittston and ties to Rochester is related to the one who joined Simone's *decina* in New Jersey. Ties to the Bufalinos and LaTorre would provide a link to the local Pittston mafia beyond Simone's Caltanissetta heritage alone and explain his presence there with a large group of men. Daylight Tramontana's family was from Villalba like Simone's, not San Cataldo, but the villages are near one another and the Trenton Tramontanas have significant connections to Pennsylvania, including Daylight's cousin listing his birth in Scranton.

John Simone's car accident in Trenton with Ponzi Cammarata and Pappy Ippolito the same year as the 1934 Scranton arrest is further evidence these *compaesani* were all intertwined when Simone was still living in Niagara Falls. That all of them would end up in Trenton where they were inducted into Angelo Bruno's Philadelphia Family and placed under John Simone's *decina* is significant to say the least. We can only see the topmost surface of these connections but these men had relationships to Western and Northeastern Pennsylvania, Western New York, and Central New Jersey — with heritage in Villalba being the tie that bound these men and their corresponding locations together.

Newspaper reports from the early 1980s refer to Angelo Bruno and John Simone as cousins, a relationship repeated in other published accounts. An anonymous 1962 letter sent to the Attorney General in Trenton noted that Charles Costello and Angelo Bruno were cousins, though the author said John

Simone “claims” to be a relative of Bruno. Angelo Bruno acknowledged his shared hometown with John Simone on an FBI recording, referring to Simone as his *paesano*, though he made no mention of a relation beyond ancestry in the same Sicilian village.


By communique dated March 15, 1962, the Bureau furnished a copy of an anonymous letter received by the Attorney General postmarked Trenton, N. J., March 2, 1962. This letter is set out as follows noting that COSTELLO is BRUNO's cousin; JOHN SIMONE claims to be related to BRUNO, and that CARL PAPPY IPPOLITO and others are known to be associates of ANGELO BRUNO:

There were unconfirmed rumors of a relation between Bruno and Simone.

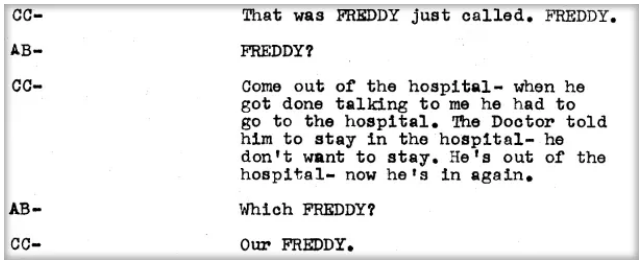
As with the anonymous letter, Charles Costello’s son told the FBI his father and Angelo Bruno were cousins, though he referred to John Simone only as a friend of the Costello family. Bruno’s namesake first cousin in Trenton, Angelo Annaloro (Bruno’s own birth name), similarly acknowledged a blood relation with the Costellos and the marital connection to the Ippolitos but told the FBI he knew of no relation between his family and Simone. John Simone may have been a “cousin” of Angelo Bruno not via direct familial relation but through their heritage in Villalba and mutual Cosa Nostra membership, two exclusive qualities shared by few other human beings on earth aside from the men discussed here.

Since originally publishing this article, researcher Harry Horrowitz has since discovered that there may be a more distant relation via older generations of the Bruno (Annaloro) and Simone (Mastrosimone) families. He stated that the mother of Angelo Bruno’s father Michele Annaloro, Giuseppina Plumeri, had a brother who married the sister of John Simone’s mother, making John Simone a more distant marital cousin of Angelo Bruno. Interviews with Bruno's relatives revealed an openness about their relation to other mafiosi in the Trenton crew like Charles Costello but they claimed ignorance of a relation to Simone, this relation perhaps too far removed to be relevant to them, but it appears John Simone’s designation as a “cousin” of Angelo Bruno is not entirely unfounded.

Where Freddy Fits In

Freddy Felice was not Sicilian, let alone from the same part of Caltanissetta province as the core members of John Simone's crew, but there are indications he was part of this *decina*. FBI reports show Charles Costello had contact with Felice, serving as a liaison between the full-time Florida member and the Philadelphia leadership. Following a heart attack, Freddy Felice notified acting *capodecina* Charles Costello about his hospital stay who then passed the information on to Angelo Bruno, referring to the New York native as "our Freddy". Costello was similarly recorded calling Felice to join him and

Bruno for a day trip during a 1964 Miami visit. These interactions with Costello, John Simone's residence in North Bay Village where Felice also lived, and this crew's pivotal role in the Family's Florida operations indicate Freddy Felice formally reported to Simone. The FBI was aware of a direct relationship between Simone and Felice as well.



CC- That was FREDDY just called. FREDDY.

AB- FREDDY?

CC- Come out of the hospital- when he got done talking to me he had to go to the hospital. The Doctor told him to stay in the hospital- he don't want to stay. He's out of the hospital- now he's in again.

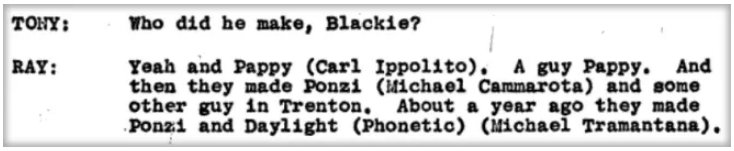
AB- Which FREDDY?

CC- Our FREDDY.

Costello referred to Felice as "our Freddy" to Angelo Bruno.

How and when Freddy Felice was inducted into the Philadelphia Family is a matter of pure speculation. Transfers between Families were once common, but Felice was too young to have been inducted into the Gambino Family alongside his brother before 1931 and his narcotics conviction in the 1940s may have been a barrier to membership when the books initially opened up in New York and New Jersey after World War II. His close ties to Patsy Erra, Mike Coppola, and the resulting misidentification as a Genovese member could suggest he transferred from this group, but it's unlikely he joined the Genovese Family in Miami only to transfer to Philadelphia soon thereafter.

Freddy Felice's move to Florida put him in contact with a wider range of mafia associates and his talent as an underworld socialite helped him network with members of Families he otherwise never would have met. The Philadelphia Family was on a steady recruitment drive throughout the 1950s following Felice's move to Miami Beach in 1948 and this could have factored into his induction. John Simone's 1959 promotion to *capodecina* and Angelo Bruno's election as boss soon thereafter created additional opportunities for membership.



TONY: Who did he make, Blackie?

RAY: Yeah and Pappy (Carl Ippolito). A guy Pappy. And then they made Ponzi (Michael Cammarota) and some other guy in Trenton. About a year ago they made Ponzi and Daylight (Phonetic) (Michael Tramantana).

Genovese leaders discussed recruitment of members in Simone's *decina*.

Informants and FBI recordings noted how the Philadelphia Family made an effort to fill out John Simone's crew with new members in Trenton and Newark following his promotion, with inductions into this crew taking place through the early 1960s. In fact, Angelo Bruno unintentionally violated a

Commission rule barring new inductions when he brought some of these members in, though Genovese leader Jerry Catena spoke on Bruno's behalf, explaining to the Commission how Bruno was unaware of the ruling given his recent appointment as Family boss after the membership books were already closed. Philadelphia was allowed to resume inducting some members by 1965, though New York's books remained closed until early 1976.

The known members under John Simone who were inducted during Bruno's first two years as boss were all based in New Jersey, though it's possible Freddy Felice was included in this recruitment drive as a Miami-based member given Simone's residence in the area. Freddy Felice was already a member by January 1961 as evidenced by the recorded conversation between Angelo Bruno and Domenico Pollina that month. Whenever or however his induction occurred, Felice's entry into the Philadelphia organization can no doubt be linked to Angelo Bruno and John Simone, be it earlier in the 1950s when they were influential members in Florida or during the initial wave of inductions after the two men gained official power in the Family's hierarchy.

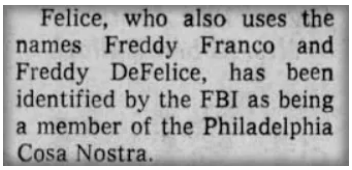
The men from Villalba discussed in the previous section were not the first Philadelphia members in Trenton, all of those named being inducted in the 1950s and early 1960s. Earlier members naturally crossed paths with Trenton given its proximity to Philadelphia, but none of the many Philadelphia informants or government witnesses have identified a Trenton *capodecina* prior to John Simone. This group's rise to prominence coincided directly with the ascent of Angelo Bruno and John Simone to leadership positions and the men chosen for induction during this period were a direct reflection of these new leaders.

The induction of men like Pappy Ippolito reflected the new leadership.

When a new leader gains power, especially a boss, he often inducts a core group of loyal associates who were previously overlooked by the leadership. Nicky Scarfo immediately inducted a group of proteges who spent years with him in Atlantic City and Joey Merlino similarly brought many of his childhood

friends from South Philadelphia into the organization. Angelo Bruno and John Simone did this in Trenton, inducting a crew of old friends and relatives who descended from their Sicilian hometown of Villalba, choosing men like Pappy Ippolito and Charles Costello as key representives of the leadership when interacting with members of other Families in New Jersey and Florida. Though he was an outlier in terms of background, it makes sense Freddy Felice was associated with this group of members given his unique position in the mafia network and rare value as a full-time Bruno representative in Miami.

In 1971 Freddy Felice was sentenced to two years in prison on charges of tax evasion for failing to file returns between 1963 and 1968. Gambino member Guido Penosi was also netted in the investigation which targeted various other underworld figures for tax fraud. Newspapers identified Felice as a made member of the Philadelphia Family in coverage of the case, citing the FBI who was by then aware of the ex-New Yorker's formal membership with the Pennsylvania-based group.


Felice, who also uses the names Freddy Franco and Freddy DeFelice, has been identified by the FBI as being a member of the Philadelphia Cosa Nostra.

By 1971 Felice's formal affiliation was well-known to the FBI.

Freddy Felice was a career criminal accused of murder early on in New York and he continued on with Cosa Nostra after his brother's killing the following year. Felice was embraced by the Genovese Mike Coppola faction, a group that was violently unhinged even by underworld standards according to Joe Valachi, a prolific killer himself. Freddy Felice continued to engage in crime for most of his life but his value in the Philadelphia Family was not as a "crime boss" in South Florida, where many men from larger Families outranked him. Rather, his value to Philadelphia came through representation.

Felice represented Philadelphia in South Florida alongside part-time resident John Simone and Felice's relationships across the country made him an asset to the savvy politician Angelo Bruno. While his background sharply contrasted with most members under John Simone, Freddy Felice's national connections and Florida base made him a natural fit for the expansive and enterprising Simone crew.

Deaths Unnatural & Natural

Angelo Bruno's interests in Miami as an influential soldier in the 1950s and John Simone's enduring presence in Florida dating back to at least 1939

provide the most likely and substantial link between Freddy Felice and the Philadelphia Family. John Simone's *decina* is made a more likely landing spot when considering his faction's wide geographic presence that included members and associates in Trenton, Bristol, and Newark in addition to Simone's residence near Miami Beach. Simone's acting captain Charles Costello was used as a point of contact with Freddy Felice and the crew's Newark presence also provided a close connection to the New York groups Freddy Felice associated with early in his career.

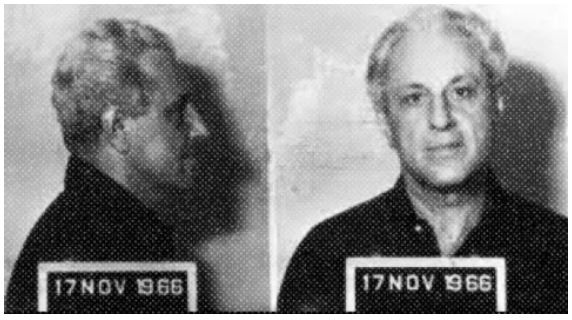
Newark-based Philadelphia member George Fresolone was inducted into the Family in 1990 while secretly cooperating with New Jersey State Police. Fresolone noted in his memoir how Philadelphia's Newark members associated closely with New York Families not only in New Jersey but in New York City itself, engaging in joint gambling operations in Freddy Felice's former Bronx stomping grounds. One of the members inducted with George Fresolone in 1990 was a resident of the Bronx. Members of the Newark crew also spent significant time in Florida like their former captain John Simone.

Simone's crew was based primarily in Trenton, Pennsylvania, and Newark.

The Newark membership operated semi-autonomously and included Antonio "Tony Bananas" Caponigro, an aggressive racketeer who operated as the Newark group's de facto leader, interacting with New York leaders as something of a peer. Though the majority of the Newark group reported to

John Simone, Tony Caponigro reportedly answered directly to the Family administration though it's not evident if this was always the case. Caponigro was no stranger to South Florida, fleeing there in 1970 when New Jersey authorities subpoenaed him alongside Simone. Though Tony Caponigro held de facto influence over the Family's Newark members for decades, reports show Simone continued to officially represent the North Jersey branch until Tony Caponigro's promotion to Family *consigliere* after the death of Joe Rugnetta in 1977.

Tony Caponigro was a non-Sicilian like his predecessor Rugnetta from Calabria and informants described how the Philadelphia Family required representatives from different Italian backgrounds in the administration to balance the Family's ethnic politics, numerous sources confirming the Family's politics had been divided by generalized "Sicilian" and "Calabrian" factions for decades although Caponigro was himself Campanian. Following his promotion to *consigliere*, the Newark members were formally assigned to Caponigro and within a few short years Caponigro put a conspiracy in motion to murder the Sicilian boss Angelo Bruno. The murder was successful but the overall plan failed. Bruno's 1980 shotgun murder resulted in Caponigro's own horrific torture-murder by Genovese Family enforcers and these events were followed by the kidnapping and execution of John Simone by a Commission-sanctioned Gambino crew before the year's end.



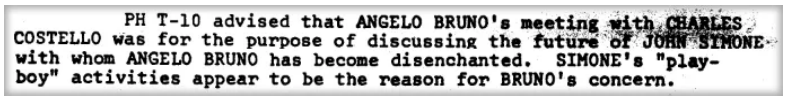
Sources agree John Simone's fate was tied to Bruno.

Some sources, among them Phil Leonetti, have suggested John Simone was a co-conspirator with Tony Caponigro in the murder of Angelo Bruno, but the man who supervised Simone's murder, Sammy Gravano, gave no indication Simone was involved in the murder of his *compaesano* Bruno. Gravano said explicitly the Simone murder was the result of a political quagmire within the Philadelphia organization resulting from the vacant boss position after Angelo Bruno's death. Multiple Family leaders were vying for control, some with the Commission's backing, and Simone allegedly wished to fill the leadership void himself without Commission approval. Other accounts support this basic view of the situation.

Angelo Bruno's loyalists during his early years as boss included his Sicilian underboss Ignazio Denaro from Palermo and *capodecina* Phil Testa, whose father Salvatore was an earlier member and came from Catania province. Despite Denaro's support of Bruno during his conflict with Domenico Pollina, the underboss quickly fell out of favor after registering a complaint to the Commission regarding Bruno's leadership, resulting in Denaro being effectively shelved. He was still allowed to keep his formal title but Phil Testa became the de facto underboss, a role he would officially take on when Ignazio Denaro died of natural causes in 1970.

Patterns repeat, and FBI reports from the mid-1970s reveal another factional divide, with Angelo Bruno, John Simone, and Frank Sindone on one side and Phil Testa and influential Calabrian soldier Nicky Scarfo on the other. This conflict did not escalate into violence and no sources have accused Testa or Scarfo of involvement in Bruno's 1980 murder, but Angelo Bruno increasingly alienated Phil Testa and no longer consulted him on matters of high-level administration. A 1977 wiretap of Testa and other senior members revealed how the underboss and his friends were not being included in the election of the new *consigliere*. The decision would be made by Angelo Bruno and a selection of older leaders, John Simone likely among them.

Despite being carried as a member of Angelo Bruno and John Simone's faction in the mid-1970s, Frank Sindone is widely believed to have conspired with Tony Caponigro in Bruno's murder. Sindone was murdered himself during this period of violent retribution. Frank Sindone's alleged betrayal of Angelo Bruno opens the possibility that Simone similarly turned on Bruno given these men were said to be in alliance a few short years earlier. Angelo Bruno and John Simone were *compaesani* who regarded each other as "cousins", and though this shared background is one of the main unifying factors between members in Cosa Nostra history, this familiarity often breeds contempt. Examples of violence between *compaesani* are too numerous to include here.


PH T-10 advised that ANGELO BRUNO's meeting with CHARLES COSTELLO was for the purpose of discussing the future of JOHN SIMONE with whom ANGELO BRUNO has become disenchanted. SIMONE's "playboy" activities appear to be the reason for BRUNO's concern.

Bruno had concerns about Simone's lifestyle in the mid-1960s.

There are indications Angelo Bruno and John Simone had an imperfect relationship dating back to the 1960s. A 1964 FBI report describes how Angelo Bruno met with Charles Costello to discuss John Simone's "future" as a result of his "playboy" lifestyle, with Bruno said to be "disenchanted". Nothing appears to have come of this exchange and it may have simply concerned the Miami Beach nightlife Simone participated in with men like Freddy Felice,

whose clubs and restaurants provided these Florida residents with constant social activity. Simone kept his *capodecina* position for sixteen years following the 1964 meeting and further reports indicate Simone remained one of the only leaders who stayed loyal to Bruno through most of his tenure as boss. Whether something provoked John Simone to turn on Angelo Bruno by 1980 or not, his murder was a direct result of Bruno's death and the erupting conflict that followed.

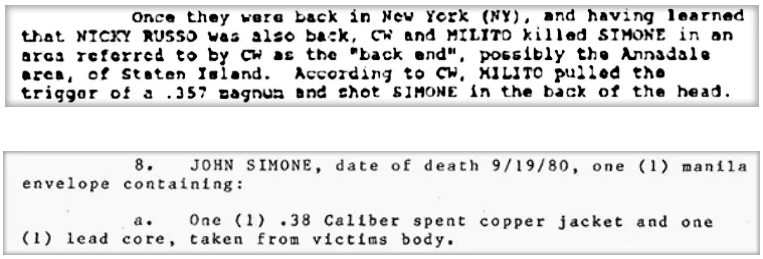
Gambino boss Paul Castellano personally tasked Sammy Gravano with the Simone contract on behalf of the Commission, who had already made the decision to support Philadelphia underboss Phil Testa as the new Family boss. Trenton-based Gambino members like Nicky Russo participated in the affair, with Russo and the Trenton Gambinos belonging to the same Brooklyn-based *decina* as Sammy Gravano. Russo wasn't the only close friend of John Simone involved in the murder — the Commission recruited his old Buffalo buddy John Tronolone of the Cleveland Family to help lure Simone up north from the safety of North Bay Village in Miami. Gravano lulled the paranoid Simone into a partial sense of security by suggesting the Commission was backing his attempt to become the new Philadelphia boss, leading to Simone's haphazard kidnapping outside of a New Jersey country club across from a small airport.

Aerial view of the location where John Simone was kidnapped.

Sammy Gravano solemnly recounted the John Simone murder in his memoir and more recently in public videos, describing how the kidnapped Simone understood his fate and accepted the drawn-out nature of his execution, requesting only that a made member be the one to pull the trigger when it came time to shoot him. Events were protracted by mistakes made at the scene of the initial kidnapping, with Gravano waiting for a phone call alongside the doomed Simone before confirming it was safe to move ahead with the murder. Gravano said the men made small talk during this dark

waiting period, with John Simone admitting participation in as many as fifty murders of his own.

Though Sammy Gravano did not know Simone prior to the murder contract, he shows significant emotion when discussing John Simone's death and expresses remorse based on his perception of Simone's character. The captive John Simone's limbs were restrained, but Gravano said the elderly man refused help when exiting the van used in the kidnapping and willingly allowed himself to be shot. His request that a Cosa Nostra member do the killing was granted before his body was abandoned on Staten Island, Louis Milito serving as triggerman.



Once they were back in New York (NY), and having learned that NICKY RUSSO was also back, CW and MILITO killed SIMONE in an area referred to by CW as the "back end", possibly the Annadale area, of Staten Island. According to CW, MILITO pulled the trigger of a .357 magnum and shot SIMONE in the back of the head.

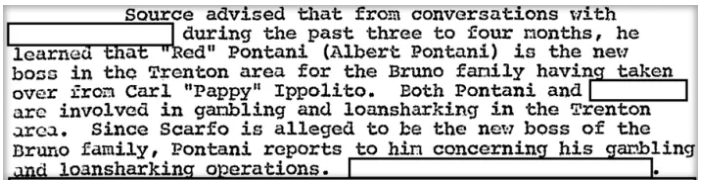
8. JOHN SIMONE, date of death 9/19/80, one (1) manila envelope containing:

a. One (1) .38 Caliber spent copper jacket and one (1) lead core, taken from victims body.

John Simone was executed by a fully-initiated member, as requested.

Freddy Felice was deceased himself by the time of John Simone's 1980 murder, dying of natural causes in January 1979. His friend Patsy Erra died naturally almost six years earlier, in 1973. Extensive cooperation by Philadelphia members began in the mid-1980s and continued through the end of the decade, though all of the government witnesses were inducted in the 1980s and thus never had an opportunity to meet Freddy Felice as formal members. Though these witnesses make reference to associates in Florida and many Philadelphia and New Jersey members visited the area regularly, no references are made to organization members who lived full-time in the state. If they were aware of the Florida-based Freddy Felice's earlier membership in their organization, it was not relevant to their personal experience in the mafia.

The 1979 death of Freddy Felice followed by the murders of Angelo Bruno and John Simone cut the organization off from its earlier Florida roots and the corresponding national relationships formed by these men during earlier decades. Pappy Ippolito and Charles Costello remained alive under the new leadership, though Ippolito experienced cognitive decline prior to his natural death and faced RICO charges that originally targeted the murdered Bruno. His deteriorating condition saved him from trial. Pappy Ippolito died in 1985 after many of his peers in the organization were killed by internecine warfare.

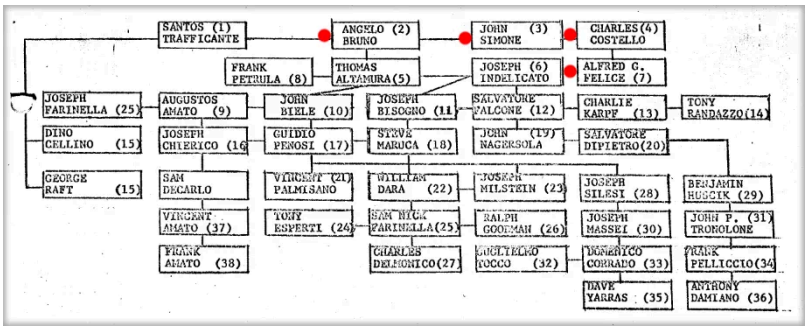


Source advised that from conversations with [redacted] during the past three to four months, he learned that "Red" Pontani (Albert Pontani) is the new boss in the Trenton area for the Bruno family having taken over from Carl "Pappy" Ippolito. Both Pontani and [redacted] are involved in gambling and loansharking in the Trenton area. Since Scarfo is alleged to be the new boss of the Bruno family, Pontani reports to him concerning his gambling and loansharking operations. [redacted].

A changing of the guard occurred in Trenton after Simone's murder.

Charles Costello was identified as John Simone's acting *capodecina* at the time of Simone's murder just as he had been many years earlier, but the declining Trenton crew was broken up and reassigned to new leaders. A newly-inducted member named Albert "Reds" Pontani became Philadelphia's de facto representative in Trenton, though legal trouble would make Pontani's run considerably shorter than his predecessors. Costello remained involved in minor activities under the new Family leadership but faded into the background during the 1980s, living primarily in North Miami. A 1983 hearing on organized crime in New Jersey included Charles Costello on their list of Philadelphia members, noting his retired status. Among the associates listed with Costello were Angelo Vizzini and Freddy Felice, the latter having died four years earlier.

Charles Costello's son Joseph, a made member, and his other son Charles Jr. had a 1988 gambling arrest but appear to have dropped away from the Family during the 1990s. Charles "Pinky" Costello Sr. passed away in 1994 and his son Joseph died in 2007, the last remaining Cosa Nostra member from this Trenton clan that closely served Angelo Bruno and John Simone in New Jersey and Florida. Joseph Costello might well have been the last living member with personal knowledge of Freddy Felice and the old Florida mafia network Felice and his father Charles were a part of.

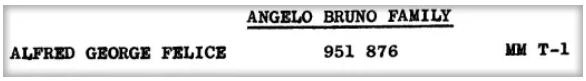


Philadelphia members were part of the Florida mafia network.

1980s boss Nicky Scarfo took great interest in Florida in the years before his life imprisonment, residing in South Florida part-time and using it as a social destination for his Philadelphia and New Jersey members while taking advantage of networking opportunities with ranking members of other Families. Today Florida remains a fixture in the Philadelphia Family, with

longtime boss Joey Merlino living and operating primarily from Boca Raton when he isn't serving prison time. South Florida is and was a networking hub for American Cosa Nostra and Merlino has a reputation as a prolific networker, being arrested with Bronx-based Genovese leaders in New York several years ago. Bonanno captain-turned-cooperator Peter Lovaglio served as liaison to Joey Merlino and described meetings he attended with Merlino and Genovese members in Florida.

Freddy Felice's Florida-based membership in the Philadelphia Family as a Bronx native shows his role in Cosa Nostra was primarily a networking opportunity for him and the Philadelphia organization. His ties were with New York Families and outside appearances all but confirmed he was with the Genovese Family or another New York group, yet Florida paved his road into an organization based in Philadelphia and gave him direct access to its highest-ranking leaders who descended from Sicilian heritage unlike the tough mainlander. Between the two Felice brothers, Petey Red Shirt added a small but violent piece to Gambino Family history in East Harlem while Freddy Red Shirt became a relatively quiet part of Philadelphia Family history in Miami Beach.


ANGELO BRUNO FAMILY

ALFRED GEORGE FELICE 951 876 MM T-1

Felice was the first known Philadelphia member to live solely in Florida.

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- For in-depth coverage of the Philadelphia and South Jersey branches of this Family and their corresponding history, I recommend all books published by George Anastasia, Celeste Morello, and Scott Burnstein.
- For information on Florida, the Trafficante Family, and additional details on New Jersey I endorse the work of Tampa historian Scott Deitche.
- “The Valachi Papers” is essential reading for those interested in the East Harlem and Bronx mafia groups the Felice brothers interacted with early on in New York City. Joe Valachi’s testimony during the McClellan hearings is equally enlightening.
- Thank you to Richard B. for his research assistance on the Felice brothers.

6 Likes

Discussion about this post

Comments Restacks

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Faffy444 Oct 21, 2021

Liked by Eric Stonefelt

excellent work. being from NIAGARA FALLS I would be interested if you could provide some research info on MAGADDINO and western NEW YORK and his Canadian connections. please continue the GREAT work.

LIKED (1) REPLY SHARE

1 reply by Eric Stonefelt

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